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RONSARD
and the Hellenic Renaissance in France

By

ISIDORE SILVER

Rosa May Distinguished University Professor,
Emeritus, in the Humanities
Washington University in St. Louis

II

RONSARD AND THE GRECIAN LYRE

Part II

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In Commemoration of the
Fourth Centenary
of the Death
of
Pierre de Ronsard
1524-1585
and to the Memory of
Paul Laumonier and Raymond Lebègue

To the Memory
of
Leonora Cohen Rosenfield

ABBREVIATIONS

The titles listed here do not appear in the Bibliography. — Paris is the place of publication if no city is mentioned. — Unless otherwise noted, references unaccompanied by designation of author or editor (e.g. XVII, 85), or preceded by *L.*, are to volume and page of *Pierre de Ronsard: Œuvres complètes*, édition critique avec introduction et commentaire, by Paul Laumonier, I. Silver, and R. Lebègue, 20 vols., 1914-1975 (Société des Textes Français Modernes).

Ancilla — Moses Hadas, *Ancilla to Classical Reading*, New York, 1954.

Batard — Yvonne Batard, *Dante, Minerve et Apollon: Les Images de la Divine Comédie*, 1952.

BHR — Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance.

Boul. — André Boulanger, ed., *L'Art poëtique de Jacques Peletier du Mans (1555)*, 1930.

Bowra, *GLP* — C.M. Bowra, *Greek Lyric Poetry from Alcman to Simonides*, Oxford, 1967[2].

Bowra, *Pindar* — C.M. Bowra, *Pindar*, Oxford, 1964.

CAH — The Cambridge Ancient History, vol. IV, *The Persian Empire and the West*, ed. by J.B. Bury, S.A. Cook, F.E. Adcock, New York, 1926.

CAIEF — Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises.

Creore — A.E. Creore, *A Word-Index to the Poetic Works of Ronsard*, 2 vols., Leeds, 1972.

Croiset — Alfred Croiset, *La Poésie de Pindare et les lois du lyrisme grec*, 1886.

Def. — Henri Chamard, ed., *La Deffence et Illustration de la Langue Francoyse*, 1904[1], 1948[2]; notes give first the pagination of the 1904 edition followed in square brackets by that of 1948; the text reproduced is that of 1904.

DLF:SS — Georges Grente, ed., *Dictionnaire des Lettres Françaises: Le Seizième Siècle*, 1951.

Dodu — Gaston Dodu, *Les Valois: Histoire d'une maison royale*, 1934.

Dornseiff — Franz Dornseiff, *Pindars Stil*, Berlin, 1921.

Duchemin — Jacqueline Duchemin, *Pindare, poète et prophète*, 1955.

Evelyn-White — H.G. Evelyn-White, ed. and tr., *Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns, and Homerica*, London, New York, 1914.

Farnell — L.R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar*, 3 vols.; vol. I, London, 1930; vol. II, Amsterdam, 1961, reprint of the London edition, 1932; vol. III, London, 1932.

Finley — John H. Finley, Jr., *Pindar and Aeschylus*, Cambridge, Mass., 1966[2].

Franchet — Henri Franchet, *Le poète et son œuvre d'après Ronsard*, 1923.

Fränkel — Hermann Fränkel, *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy*, trs., Moses Hadas and James Willis, New York, London, 1975.

FRSS — Frieda S. Brown, ed., *French Renaissance Studies in Honor of Isidore Silver, Kentucky Romance Quarterly*, vol. XXI, Supplement No. 2, Lexington, Kentucky, 1974.

Gardiner — E.N. Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, Oxford, 1930.

Gildersleeve — Basil L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes*, 1890[2].

GLP — See Bowra.

Grimal — Pierre Grimal, *Dictionnaire de la mythologie grecque et romaine*, 1951.

Hist. de la Pl. — Henri Chamard, *Histoire de la Pléiade*, 4 vols., 1939-1940.

Huguet — Edmond Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*, 7 vols., 1925-1967.

L. — Paul Laumonier, Isidore Silver, Raymond Lebègue, eds., *Pierre de Ronsard: Œuvres complètes*, édition critique avec introduction et commentaire, 20 vols., 1914-1975 (Société des Textes Français Modernes).

Lattimore — Richmond Lattimore, tr., *The Odes of Pindar*, Chicago, 1959.

Lebègue — Raymond Lebègue, *La Poésie française de 1560 à 1630*, 2 vols., 1951.

Lemonnier — Henry Lemonnier, *La lutte contre la maison d'Autriche. La France sous Henri II (1519-1559)*. Tome cinquième, II, de l'*Histoire de France* d'Ernest Lavisse, 1904.

LL. — Paul Laumonier, ed., *Œuvres complètes de P. de Ronsard*, 8 vols., 1914-1919. Text of 1584.

Lyra Graeca — J.M. Edmonds, ed. and tr., *Lyra Graeca*, 3 vols., London, New York, 1927.

Marrou — H.I. Marrou, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité*, 1965[6].

Méautis — Georges Méautis, *Pindare le Dorien*, Neuchâtel, 1962.

Myers — Ernest Myers, tr., *The Extant Odes of Pindar*, London, 1895[5].

NCMH — *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. II, *The Reformation, 1520-1559*, ed. G.R. Elton, 1962; vol. III, *The Counter-Reformation and Price-Revolution, 1559-1610*, ed. R.B. Wernham, 1968.

Norwood — Gilbert Norwood, *Pindar*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1974.

OCD — M. Cary *et al.*, eds., *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1953.

Paideia — Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, tr. Gilbert Highet, 3 vols., Oxford, 1939-1945.

Perdrizet — Pierre Perdrizet, *Ronsard et la Réforme*, 1902.

Péron — Jacques Péron, *Les Images maritimes de Pindare*, 1974.

Pineaux — Jacques Pineaux, *La Poésie des protestants de langue française (1559-1598)*, 1971.

PMLA — *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.*

POR — Isidore Silver, *The Pindaric Odes of Ronsard*, 1937.

Puech — Aimé Puech, ed. and tr., *Pindare*, 4 vols., 1930-1952.

RGE — Isidore Silver, *Ronsard and the Greek Epic*, St. Louis, 1961; vol. I of *Ronsard and the Hellenic Renaissance in France.*

RGL — Isidore Silver, *Ronsard and the Grecian Lyre*, Part I, Geneva, 1980, Part II, Geneva, 1985; vol. II of *Ronsard and the Hellenic Renaissance in France.*

RGTP — Isidore Silver, *Ronsard's General Theory of Poetry*, St. Louis, 1973; vol. II of *The Intellectual Evolution of Ronsard.*

RHLF — *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France.*

Romier — Lucien Romier, *Les Origines politiques des guerres de religion*, 2 vols., 1913-1914.

Rons. et l'Hum. — Pierre de Nolhac, *Ronsard et l'Humanisme*, 1921.

RPL — Paul Laumonier, *Ronsard poète lyrique*, 1923[2].

RR — *Romanic Review.*

RST — Pierre Champion, *Ronsard et son temps*, 1925.

RTP — Terence Cave, ed., *Ronsard the Poet*, London, 1973.

S. — Isidore Silver, ed., *Les Œuvres de Pierre de Ronsard*. Texte de 1587, 8 vols., St. Louis, Chicago, Paris, 1966-1970.

Sandys — *John Sandys, ed. and tr., The Odes of Pindar*, London, New York, 1930.

Slater — William J. Slater, ed., *Lexicon to Pindar*, Berlin, 1969.

Snell — Bruno Snell, *Poetry and Society: The Role of Poetry in Ancient Greece*, Bloomington, 1961.

TFI — Isidore Silver, *The Formative Influences*, St. Louis, 1969; vol. I of *The Intellectual Evolution of Ronsard*.

Vianey — Joseph Vianey, *Les Odes de Ronsard*, 1946.

Vie — Paul Laumonier, ed., *La Vie de P. de Ronsard de Claude Binet (1586)*, 1910.

WD — Hesiod's *Works and Days*. See Evelyn-White.

Weber — Henri Weber, *La Création poétique au XVI^e siècle en France*, 2 vols., 1956.

Wilamowitz — Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Pindaros*, Berlin, 1922.

N.B.: For lexical problems in the odes of Pindar I have relied on W.J. Slater's *Lexicon to Pindar*. The mention of Johannes Rumpel's *Lexicon Pindaricum* in Part I, p. 21, was inadvertently retained and should be disregarded.

CHAPTER XVI

REFLECTIONS OF PINDAR AND RONSARD ON LYRIC POETRY

I. The Tillers of the Graces' Garden*

On the subject of his own gifts as a poet Pindar was not reticent. «Indeed, as no stranger, nor as ignorant of the Muses, was I reared by famous Thebes», he says in one of the fragments (198, p. 609), and in another, «My voice is sweeter than the bee-wrought honeycombs» (152, p. 601). His delight in the making of poetry brings spontaneously to his mind images delicate and delightful: «The weaving of wreaths is an easy task... The Muse is welding gold and ivory white in one, with the lily [coral] she hath stolen from beneath the ocean's dew» (Nem., VII, 77-79). His dedication is to the art of poetry which carried his word throughout Hellas: «No sculptor am I, that I should carve statues doomed to linger only on the pedestal where they stand. No! I would bid my sweet song speed from Aegina, in every argosy, and in every skiff...» (Nem., V, 1-3). His ode for Aristomenes is «sped with wings of my skill» (Pyth., VIII, 34). This ancient image of the winged word, the winged craft, came naturally to Pindar. His poetic power is that of the eagle swooping beyond the sea, swiftest among all flying things, who in repose sleeps upon the scepter of Zeus.[1]

Pindar's identification of himself with the eagle and the association of the eagle with Zeus are not unmeditated accidents of composition. «We have not to do with the naïve. Pindar is profondly self-conscious, and his witness concerning himself is true. He distinctly claims for himself elevation, opulence, force, cunning workmanship, vigorous execution. In what seems to moderns almost unlovely self-assertion, he vindicates his rank as a poet just as he would vindicate his rank as an aristocrat. He is an eagle, his rivals are

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* A modified form of this section appeared on pp. 369-375 of the *Mélanges sur la littérature de la Renaissance à la mémoire de V.-L. Saulnier*, Genève, Librairie Droz, 1984.

[1] Nem., V, 21; III, 80; Pyth., I, 6.

ravens and daws.»[2] «He seems», Gildersleeve says (p. xxxii), «to rise to the stature of Apollo himself... How, then, is this to be reconciled with the self-control, the freedom from boasting, which Hellenic ethic enjoins? It is because of the source of genius — God himself.»[3]

For just as Apollo had claimed the divine prerogative to «declare to men the unfailing will of Zeus»,[4] so Pindar, on the human level, prays in the sixth Paean (1-6) to Pytho, that is, to Apollo's shrine at Delphi, for a similar prerogative: «I beseech thee... to welcome me... as a prophet of the tuneful Pierides.» To the Muse herself, daughter of Zeus, he addresses an identical prayer, even more urgent in its directness and concision: «Muse! be thou mine oracle, and I shall be thy prophet» (frag. 150, p. 601). With «the lofty self-consciousness of genius [that] Pindar shows in all his poems»[5] he writes in the ninth Olympian (21-27): «I light up that dear city [Locrian Opus] with dazzling songs of praise, and I shall spread my message everywhere, more swiftly than proud steed or winged ship, so surely as I, by the ordering of destiny, am tilling the choicest garden of the Graces, for they are givers of delight.»

The Graces, like the Muses, are daughters of Zeus, and sometimes join with them in Apollo's choir. They are divinities of Beauty and companions of Athena, the goddess of intellectual activity.[6] To cultivate their garden «is the key-note of Pindar's claims»,[7] and Ronsard may have so recognized it, both for Pindar and himself, when he placed these words at the head of the most ambitious of his triadic odes:

> Errant par les champs de la Grace
> Qui peint mes vers de ses couleurs,
> Sur les bords Dirceans[8] j'amasse
> Le tesor des plus riches fleurs...
> (III, 118-119)

It is worthy of note, however, that expressions are frequently found in Pindar's odes which attenuate the force of what appears to be «unlovely self-

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[2] Gildersleeve, p. xxxv. Cf. also Francesco Guglielmino, «Quel che Pindaro sentiva di sè», *Atene e Roma*, N.S. VIII (1927), p. 37, for the image of the eagle as an expression of Pindar's sense of his poetic superiority.

[3] Cf. Finley, p. 65: «... as the athlete was to him no mere exhibitor of feats, so the poet was no simple purveyor of words. Both were caught up in a process by which the gods give value to life; they were equally dependent on the gods. Hence he rejects mere learning as contrasted to natural gifts.»

[4] Evelyn-White, p. 333.

[5] Gildersleeve, p. xxxii.

[6] Grimal, p. 89, s.v. *Charites*.

[7] Gildersleeve, p. 204.

[8] Dirce was the Theban spring from whose waters Pindar drew his inspiration.

assertion». In the fourth Pythian (248) he writes, «To many another am I a leader in the lore of song». Removed from its context this seems like an unalleviated boast, but it is preceded immediately by verses which put the statement in a rather softer light: «It is too far for me to fare along the high-road, for time is pressing, and I know a short path.» Pindar is intimating, somewhat apologetically, that his exceptionally long ode is drawing to a close. Sandys (p. 225, n. 1) explains the whole passage as follows: «To many others I am a guide in the poetic art; I can set them an example of conciseness in narrative.» This is far from equivalent to the mere assertion that he is a leader of many poets. Again, when Pindar compares himself with his rivals, a saving note of appeal or prayer is often present, sometimes to a god, sometimes to his own δαίμων.[9]

Like Pindar, Ronsard was not reticent about his poetic gifts. By 1550 some of his verses had already appeared in print and some of his Pindaric odes had probably been presented in manuscript to their *dédicataires* of royal or princely rank. But there is an immense abyss between lack of reticence and the aggressive self-assertiveness of the opening remarks of the preface *Au Lecteur* of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* — preponderantly an affirmation of Ronsard's initiative in inaugurating the Pindaric and Horatian odes in French literature and of his claim to superiority in lyric poetry:

«Si les hommes tant des siecles passés que du nostre, ont merité quelque louange pour avoir piqué diligentement aprés les traces de ceus qui courant par la carriere[10] de leurs inventions, ont de bien loin franchi la borne[11]: combien davantage doit on vanter le coureur, qui galopant librement par les campaignes Attiques, & Romaines osa tracer un sentier inconnu pour aller à l'immortalité? Non que je soi, lecteur, si gourmand de gloire, ou tant tormenté d'ambitieuse presumption, que je te vueille forcer de me bailler ce que le tens, peut estre, me donnera (tant s'en faut, que c'est la moindre affection que j'aie, de me voir pour si peu de frivoles jeunesses estimé). Mais quand tu m'appelleras le premier auteur Lirique François, & celui qui a guidé les autres au chemin de si honneste labeur, lors tu me rendras ce que tu me dois & je m'efforcerai te faire apprendre qu'en vain je ne l'aurai receu... Donques m'acheminant par un sentier inconnu, & monstrant le moien de suivre Pindare, & Horace, je puis bien dire (& certes sans vanterie) ce que lui-méme modestement témoigne de lui,

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[9] Nem., IX, 53-55; Pyth., I, 41-45.

[10] Image frequent in Pindar: Ol., IX, 81; Pyth., X, 65; XI, 38-39; Isth., II, 1-2.

[11] Cf. Nem., VII, 70-71.

Libera per vacuum posui vestigia princeps,
Non aliena meo pressi pede.»[12]
(I, 43, 45)

As we read this preface we are doubly aware of the thoroughness with which Ronsard had steeped himself in the Dircean fountain. Not only is the vocabulary of the passage derived in part from Pindar, it strives, though much too contentiously, to imitate the passages in which Pindar spoke of his own superior qualities as a craftsman. The lines given above have also their verse setting, for in the Pindaric ode to Madame Marguerite Ronsard celebrates the victory over «le monstre Ignorance» in this fashion:

Répandon devant ses yeus
Ma musique toute neuve
Et ma douceur qui abreuve
L'honneur alteré des cieus.

Affin que la Nimphe voie
Que mon luc premierement
Aus François montra la voie
De sonner si proprement:
Et comme imprimant ma trace
Au champ Attiq' & Romain,
Callimaq', Pindare, Horace,
Je deterrai de ma main.
(I, 77-78; cf. I, 164)

In the 1550 preface he admits Du Bellay to a level of equality with himself and has high praise for Peletier, but with the exception of Clément Marot, Héroët, Scève, and Saint-Gelais, he condemns earlier French poetry as «foible, & languissante» (I, 46). Though he refers to Marot as the «seulle lumiere en ses ans de la vulgaire poësie» (I, 44), he devotes the first triad of *La Victoire de François de Bourbon* (I, 82-83) to an unjust comparison between himself and his predecessor resulting from an erroneous understanding of Pindar's allusion to Archilochus in the ninth Olympian.[13]

Even Horace, whose influence on the Vendômois was probably more pervasive and enduring than that of Pindar, does not escape severe treatment in this period of Ronsard's self-aggrandizement and fascination with the poet of Thebes:

Par une cheute subite
Encor je n'ai fait nommer
Du nom de Ronsard la mer
Bien que Pindare j'imite:
Horace harpeur latin
Etant fils d'un libertin

[12] Horace, *Epistles*, I, xix, 21-22.

[13] See *RGL*, Part I, Chap. XI, sec. ix.

Basse & lente avoit l'audace,
Non pas moi de franche race,
Dont la Grace enfle les sons,
Avec plus horrible aleine,
Affin que Phebus rameine
Par moi ses vieilles chansons.
(I, 118)

He bases his hope for the immortality of his poems on his choice of Pindar as his guide:

Si la gloire & la lumiere
De Smyrne[14] luist la premiere
L'honneur sur tous emportant,
Une muette fumiere
N'obscurcist Thebes pourtant.
Les vers qu'il m'a pleu d'elire
Dessus les nerfs de ma lire
Vivront, & superieurs
Du tens, on les voira lire
Des hommes posterieurs.[15]
(II, 32)

Ronsard, like the Theban lyrist, is certain that his winged verse will reach to every part of the world — he too is no statuary carving immobile and voiceless effigies:

Je n'ai pas les mains apprises
Au métier muet de ceus,
Qui font une image assise
Sus des piliers paresseus.

Ma painture n'est pas mue[16]
Mais vive, & par l'univers
Guindée en l'air se remue
De sus l'engin de mes vers.
(II, 148-149)

In most of these passages of prose and verse, what we witness is a conscious effort to assume the ideas, attitudes, and poetic imagery of Pindar in fulfillment of the program announced in Du Bellay's *Deffence*. What has

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[14] Homer's birthplace.

[15] There were moments, however, when Ronsard's supreme confidence in his poetic abilities was replaced by a more modest estimate of his own stature in comparison with that of Pindar:

Que pleust à Dieu qu'à sa haultesse
Fust egale ma petitesse...
(III, 113)

[16] «Note marginale des éditions de 1578 et de 1584: 'Mue, muete, vieil mot François.'» Note by Laumonier.

been largely missing thus far is the authentic note that unmistakably characterizes «the lofty self-consciousness of genius», the note that rings with a profound inner conviction expressing and yet transcending mere subjective certainty, as in the overture of the sixth Pythian for Xenocrates of Acragas: «There hath been built and prepared in Apollo's golden glen a Pythian victor's treasure-house of song, which neither wintry rain [χειμέριος ὄμβρος][17] with its invading onset, the pitiless host launched from deep-thundering clouds, nor the storm-wind with its swirl of shingle, shall buffet and sweep away into the recesses of the sea.»

When Horace read these words they rang in unison with his own conviction of the deathless quality of his poems: «I have completed a monument more enduring than bronze, loftier than the royal pyramids, which neither corroding rain [imber edax][17] nor the impetuous North wind can destroy, nor the numberless succession of years, nor the flight of ages.» Horace wrote this passage as an epilogue to his third book of odes, and it was in reading these verses that Ronsard, as he completed the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes*, experienced the deep conviction that time would measure and vindicate his poems too against a standard of whose Pindaric origin he may not have been aware[18]:

> Plus dur que fer, j'ai fini mon ouvrage,
> Que l'an dispost à demener les pas,
> Ne l'eau rongearde[17] ou des freres la rage[19]
> L'injuriant ne ruront point à bas...
>
> (II, 152)

In the *Bocage* published four years later it was in a minor mode, manifesting a transient discouragement, that he expressed the same legitimate assurance that posterity was to confirm:

> Cesse tes pleurs, mon livre, il n'est pas ordonné
> Du destin, que moi vif tu reçoives ta gloire:
> Avant que passé j'aye outre la rive noire,
> L'honneur que l'on te doit ne te sera donné.
>
> Apres mile ans je voi que quelcun étonné
> En mes vers de bien loin viendra de mon Loir boire,
> Et voiant mon païs[20] à peine voudra croire
> Que d'un si petit champ tel poëte soit né.
>
> (VI, 56-57)

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[17] «The original of Hor. Od. 3, 30, 3-4: quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens / possit diruere.» Gildersleeve, p. 317. Cf. *RPL*, p. 368 and n. 7.

[18] Evidence of Ronsard's study of Pyth. VI is very tenuous.

[19] «Castor et Pollux, 'fratres Helenae' (cf. Horace, *Carm.*, I, iii, 2).» Note by Laumonier. Cf. I, 112, vv. 61-64. — Perhaps Ronsard refers to «la rage» of Castor and Pollux because they appeared to seamen in storms, though their manifestation as St. Elmo's fire was beneficent and welcome.

[20] Cf. II, 105, v. 16; 202, v. 54.

But with masterful and authentic confidence he returns to the major mode in the *Responce aux injures* (1563) as he overwhelms the Huguenot pamphleteers who had dared to attack him for his defence of Catholicism:

Tu ne le puis nyer! car de ma plenitude
Vous estes tous remplis: je suis seul vostre estude,
Vous estes tous yssus de la grandeur de moy,
Vous estes mes sujets, & je suis vostre loy.
Vous estes mes ruisseaux, je suis vostre fonteine,
Et plus vous m'espuisés, plus ma fertile veine
Repoussant le sablon, jette une source d'eaux
D'un surjon eternel pour vous autres ruisseaux[21].
(XI, 168-169)

In one of the Pindaric odes of 1550 he had said to the partner of his Hellenic studies:

O Baïf, la plume pronte
Vouloir monter jusqu'aus dieus,
D'un vol qui le ciel surmonte
Trompe l'enfer odieus.
(I, 131)

Thirty-five years later, in the mood of serene resignation that accompanied his farewell to the world in the last sonnet of the *Derniers vers*, he is still sustained by the conviction that what he had written was destined to remain imperishable:

C'est fait j'ay devidé le cours de mes destins,
J'ay vescu j'ay rendu mon nom assez insigne,
Ma plume vole au ciel pour estre quelque signe
Loin des appas mondains qui trompent les plus fins.
(XVIII, 180)

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[21] «Cette fière et véhémente déclaration ne s'adresse qu'aux pamphlétaires huguenots. Mais on a pu l'appliquer, avec des atténuations, à tous les poètes de la deuxième moitié du XVI[e] siècle et du premier tiers du XVII[e]. Tous sont 'issus' de Ronsard, y compris Desportes, du Bartas, d'Aubigné, Malherbe et Regnier. Cf. mon *Ronsard poète lyr.*, pp. 720 et suiv., et Marcel Raymond, *Influence de Ronsard...* (thèse de Paris, Champion, 1927 [2nd. ed., Geneva, 1965]).» Note by Laumonier. — We may justly say of Ronsard, when he writes with this supreme and authentic assurance that he stands at the summit of contemporary French poetry, what has been said of the Theban whom he took for one of his earliest models: «Pindar looks down on lesser poets as eagles on ravens (O., 2, 96), on daws (N., 3, 82). Contempt, scorn, superciliousness are hardly the words. It is a sublime looking over the heads of his rivals with at most a faint consciousness of their cawing far below. This is a dangerous assumption, an attitude that may be nothing but a posture, and we resent it in inferior poets, who take on Pindaric airs.» Gildersleeve, pp. xxxii-xxxiii. — See *RGL*, Part I, p. 144, n. 5, Verdun Saulnier's magnificent appreciation of these verses.

II. Creative Tradition and Poetic Ascesis

As one reads some recent and earlier scholarship devoted to Pindar, one cannot help noting how frequently students of his poetry emphasize his attentive comments on various aspects of his craft.

«On pourrait à première vue s'étonner», Jacqueline Duchemin writes, «de voir quelle place Pindare donne dans ses poèmes aux considérations sur son art. Nous n'avons eu nulle peine à relever chez lui les nombreux éléments d'une théorie de l'inspiration, et nous en avons longuement étudié le double aspect, celui qui relève des Muses [pp. 21-53], fixant dans la mémoire des hommes les exploits des héros et les actes des dieux, et celui qui relève des Charites [pp. 54-94], parant de mille attraits la matière traitée pour lui assurer la pérennité, faisant par la grâce de ces déesses pénétrer l'être humain, pourvu qu'il le mérite, aux bienheureux séjours de l'immortalité. Nous avons par ailleurs noté combien de ses images s'appliquent à son œuvre même et combien celle-ci est au premier rang de ses pensées pendant qu'il l'exécute [pp. 229-265]. Tout se passe comme si le poète célébrait à la fois deux objets, la victoire, certes, mais aussi l'ode même qui la chante: l'une et l'autre revêt à ses yeux la même importance, et seule la rencontre de l'une et de l'autre fait naître la gloire.»[22]

Profoundly conscious of his originality, Pindar nevertheless did not hesitate to acknowledge his adherence to earlier traditions of Hellenic poetry. Alluding to the slaying of Memnon by Achilles at the siege of Troy, he writes: «This was the theme which the bards of old found for their beaten path [ὁδὸν ἀμαξιτόν, *lit.* highway], and I myself am following in their steps, while I meditate my theme...» (Nem., VI, 55-56). He seems to take delight in the existence of the ancient tradition of the triumphal hymn as he celebrates the victory of Deinias in the double foot-race: «I rejoice in sounding forth the exultant praise that befitteth such an exploit... there was indeed a song of triumph, even in the olden time...» (Nem., VIII, 48-51). But there are also moments when poetic necessity forces him to abandon the well-travelled road: «It is too far for me to fare along the high-road [κατ' ἀμαξιτόν]» (Pyth., IV, 247).

Pindar's observance of tradition was far more deeply grounded in the ancient religious and mythological beliefs of Greece than his knowledge and imitation of earlier literary texts might imply. «Son génie est concret, enraciné dans les vivantes traditions dont se nourrit au jour le jour le sentiment

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[22] Duchemin, p. 283; see also p. 336. — Cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 1: «No Greek poet says so much as Pindar about his art»; Norwood, p. 165; Snell, p. 68; Gildersleeve, p. xxxvi, «Of the richness of his workmanship none is better aware than he.»

religieux de ses contemporains, curieux de pittoresque et d'individuel, amoureux des émotions les plus vigoureuses comme des plus gracieuses évocations. Rien ne le laisse indifférent de ce que l'imagination des peuples a donné pour parure aux aspirations du cœur humain.» «Notre poète... a reçu de ses devanciers et sûrement aussi des traditions rituelles, la richesse des attributs sans nombre que traduisent tant d'épithètes éclatantes composées en l'honneur des dieux.»[23] Even when Pindar is indebted to a literary ancestor, Homer or Hesiod, for example, he is sometimes indirectly drawing upon still earlier traditions of the Greek people.[24] «Lorsqu'il nomme Eunomie, Justice et Paix 'dispensatrices de la richesse, filles précieuses de la sage Thémis' (*Olympiques*, XIII, 7-8), nous pourrions croire que ce sont de pures créations de sa pensée; mais nous savons qu'il n'en est rien: elles lui sont venues d'Hésiode [*Théog.*, 901-903], qui lui-même, peut-être, les avait déjà reçues de la tradition.»[25]

It must be evident that no amount of study by Ronsard of the odes of Pindar or of any other Greek poet could have brought him to the point of being «enraciné dans les vivantes traditions» of Hellas. Such roots as he might send down could hardly penetrate beneath the literary level, and the lovely flowers that bloomed in his «Hellenic» poems could draw only a derivative nourishment from the soil that immediately sustained a Pindar, a Simonides, or a Sappho. As much as any writer of his time Ronsard was autochthonously French. Had he set his heart upon it, he could not have achieved an authentic Hellenic mutation. «Il en est d'un individu comme d'un parti, d'une école, d'un peuple, de tout organisme; pas d'arrêt brusque, mais continuité, transformation lente de ses énergies» (*RPL*, p. 203).

Though it is undeniable that in turning away from the prevailing forms of French poetry and endowing it with a more decisively classical, especially Hellenic, orientation than it had ever had, Ronsard and his colleagues were creating a revolutionary change in the substance and direction of their art, it remains true that the rupture with the French past was not nearly as complete as the Vendômois sometimes pretended. In contradistinction to Pindar's unquestioning acceptance of the fundamental traditions which constituted both the center and the horizon of his poetic thought, traditions which, for sufficiently cogent reasons, he freely modified, Ronsard began by violently rejecting with an almost histrionic rhetoric the traditions that until then had governed the poetry of France.

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[23] Duchemin, pp. 64 and 224. — Some of these epithets are given by Gildersleeve, p. xl.

[24] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 33-34, 64.

[25] Duchemin, p. 127; cf. pp. 138-139, 254, 305.

In his overmastering desire to «frapper un grand coup», as Laumonier said, he wrote that «l'imitation des nostres m'est tant odieuse (d'autant que la langue est encores en son enfance) que pour cette raison je me suis éloingné d'eus, prenant stile apart, sens apart, euvre apart, ne desirant avoir rien de commun avecq' une si monstrueuse erreur. Donques m'acheminant par un sentier inconnu, & monstrant le moien de suivre Pindare, & Horace...» (I, 45; cf. I, 237). There is irony in the fact that the «sentier inconnu» that Ronsard elected to follow because it supposedly freed him from the trammels of native literary tradition, led him to the Greek poet whose most deep-rooted traditions he could not hope to assimilate, and who had himself confidently trodden the highway, the beaten path, that his predecessors had traced.

The proverb attributed to Solon, χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά, «beautiful things are difficult to achieve», no doubt expressed a sentiment that was widespread among the Hellenic people long before it was formulated in this concise maxim. It must have found frequent application in every field of human endeavor, but in the Great Games it could easily have been one of the dominant thoughts accompanying every victory.

In the triumphal odes it was Pindar's task to celebrate these victories. Like every Greek he knew what an extraordinary effort went into the training of men and youths preparing to compete against the flower of the athletic world of Hellas. He never tired of repeating, nor did his audiences ever tire of hearing, the substance of Solon's aphorism, expressed in almost endless variations: «Few indeed have won, without toil, the joy that is a light of life above all labours» (Ol., X, 22-23; cf. Ol., XI, 4-6). «Blessed art thou for after much toil thou hast a memorial of noble words» (Pyth., V, 46-49, tr. Myers).[26]

Writing so frequently and in such deep communion of feeling with the contestants at the Games, Pindar came to think of himself figuratively as a participant and of his ode as one of the athletic events. He assumes the posture of a gymnast when he writes: «I am standing on feet lightly poised, taking breath before I speak» (Nem., VIII, 19), or «Dig a long pit for my jump from here; my knees can leap lightly» (Nem., V, 19-20, tr. Bowra). Pindar seems especially fond of the comparison between the javelin-throw and the writing of odes: «But I, while casting my javelins straight with a whirl must not miss the mark» (Ol., XIII, 93-94); «I trust I may not fling, as it were, outside the lists the bronze-tipped javelin» (Pyth., I, 43-44).[27]

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[26] Cf. Pyth., XII, 28-29; Nem., IV, 1-3; VII, 14-16, 74; Isth., I, 41-45; V, 55-56; VI, 10-14.

[27] Cf. Nem., VII, 70-72; IX, 53-55; Isth., II, 35-37; in Nem., IV, 93-96, the comparison is between wrestling and the writing of poetry.

Sometimes he gives the impression that writing poetry is effortless for him, as when he says, «The weaving of wreaths is an easy task» (Nem., VII, 77-78); or «The wise poet finds it an easy boon [δόσις, *lit.* gift], in requital for [the victor's] manifold toil, to say his good word» (Isth., I, 45-46). This impression of facility may be strengthened when one reads that poetry is «the Muses' gift [Μοισᾶν δόσιν], the sweet fruit of my fancy» (Ol., VII, 7-8), or that the poet's talent is given to him by nature (Ol., II, 86). But what Pindar probably intended to convey when he said that it was easy to weave a wreath of verse for victors was the deep personal gratification he derived as the spokesman of the universal joy with which the victory was celebrated by the athlete, his family, friends, and city.

To understand the immense difficulty of the creative process in poetry as Pindar conceived it, one has only to read the end of the fourth Nemean (93-94) in honor of the victory in wrestling of Timasarchus of Aegina. The poet, he says, in «language... borrowed from the wrestling school»,[28] «would grapple indeed in the strife, bending the words [ῥήματα πλέκων, *lit.* weaving the words], beneath his grasp, not budging an inch as he wrestleth in speech». These lines, it is true, describe the work of Euphanes, an earlier poet, but they are surely drawn in large part from Pindar's own experience. «Ῥήματα πλέκειν bewundert er an einem alten Epinikiendichter aus Aigina... in dem Pindar mit Wohlgefallen ein Kunstideal hinstellt, das in der Richtung seines eignen Wesens liegt.»[29].

Pindar's description of the poetic labors of Euphanes is almost palpable in the directness of its intuition. His allusions to his own craftsmanship, though they do not, even when supported by imagery drawn from the Games, attain quite this degree of tangibility, leave no doubt as to the seriousness of his attitude, his perception of the difficulty of the poetic art, and of the attentive diligence which its practice demands: «Pindar hat das Dichten sehr ernst genommen, immer wieder betont er: zwei Dinge müssen zusammenwirken, um ein Kunstwerk zu erzeugen: die Arbeit und Sorgfalt des Dichters, die μελέτη... und das Irrationale, das Schöpferische, Göttliche, das geheimnisvolle Geschenk der Musen.»[30]

Thus, when Pindar writes of the gift of the Muses or of the poetic endowment given by nature, he is not advancing the idea that nature and the Muses are the indulgent donors of a shallow facility. Marrou (p. 159) could with full justification have applied the following observation to Pindar: «Le travail de l'intelligence, la pratique des sciences et des arts, était un sûr instrument

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[28] Note by Sandys, p. 355.

[29] Dornseiff, p. 59.

[30] *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

d'ascèse qui, purifiant l'âme des souillures de la passion terrestre, la dégageait peu à peu des liens accablants de la matière. Après une vie tout entière consacrée au service des Muses, on pouvait avec assurance compter sur le patronage de ces déesses qui appeleraient à elles et introduiraient dans les sphères astrales les âmes ainsi préparées à devenir dignes d'un tel honneur.»[31] Pindar follows the traditional road laid out by his predecessors, but he follows it ἔχων μελέταν (Nem., VI, 56), «with diligence, taking pains» (Slater). The ode that he composes for Asopichus is ἔν τε μελέταις (Ol., XIV, 18), «among my (poetic) preoccupations, an object of care» (Slater).

One might select almost at random any page of Paul Laumonier's critical edition of Ronsard, with its multiplicity of variants resulting from endless revisions, and know at once that in poetic scruple, conscientious artistic zeal, and instinctive submission to the ascesis demanded of great poetry, Ronsard was of the same temper as Pindar. There are moments, of course, especially in the early period, when he was too eager to believe with Pindar, whom he then only partially understood, that poets are born and not made. But even as he was absorbing what he supposed to be the Theban's doctrine of an unearned poetic facility granted by the grace of a complaisant heaven, he was offering Du Bellay the example of world-renowned poets whose achievements had been far from effortless:

> Par un labeur glorieus
> Ont surmonté les fureur poetiques
> D'Homere, Horace, & des autres antiques
> Les siecles injurieus.
>
> (II, 66)

He damns with faint praise Clément Marot's *Epistre* celebrating the victory of François de Bourbon at Cérisoles — its proper commemoration had awaited «la main parfaite D'un ouvrier ingenieus», Ronsard, (I, 183); in his revisions he will replace «ingenieus» with «studieus», «industrieux», «laborieus». Describing to Jean de la Péruse the great undertaking of his early years, «De marier les Odes à la Lire», he admits in 1553 that it did not suffice to be destined from birth to the career of poet:

> Non sans labeur j'entrepris si grand chose,
> Mais le Destin qui tout en tous dispose,
> M'i avoit tant ains que naistre adonné,
> Qu'en peu de jours je m'i vi façonné,
> Par deus chemins suivant la vieille trace
> Des premiers pas de Pindare & d'Horace.
>
> (V, 260)

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[31] Cf. Ronsard, III, 143, vv. 433-442, the words of Jupiter to the Muses, and see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, p. 34.

By 1563 he had learned that poetic laurels grow «sur la cyme d'un mont», and that without toil he could never place the wreath on his brow. At the beginning of the *Hymne de l'Hyver* he writes:

> Je veux avecq' travail brusquement y monter,
> M'esgraphinant les mains avant que l'apporter...
> (XII, 68; cf. p. 70, vv. 39-40)

A score of years later, the final revision of this *Hymne* demonstrates even more explicitly the total transformation of his earlier opinion[32]:

> Je ne veux sur mon front la couronne attacher
> D'un Laurier de jardins trop facile à chercher...
> (*S.*, VI, 183; cf. *L.*, XVIII, 234, vv. 19-22)

III. The Triumphal Ode: Its Meaning and Splendor; «Glory out of Transcience»

Gildersleeve pays tribute to the masters of style and to the archaeologists who have left us their impressions of the Olympic games or increased our knowledge of the conditions in which they took place. «Yet, after all that has been said by word-painter and by archaeologist, the poet must give the poet's meaning to the whole. Reconstruct Greek life and we shall better understand Pindar. With all my heart; but after the reconstruction we shall need the poet's light as much as ever, if not more» (p. xxi).

Nowhere did Pindar illuminate in greater brilliance and profundity, for Greece and for mankind, the meaning of the Games and of the poetry that celebrated them, than in the overture of the first Pythian ode. It glorifies the power of Greek poetry to comprehend, to utter in song, and represent in dance the immanence of Zeus in everything beautiful and excellent, and his repudiation of all that is evil, distorted, and monstrous. «Grant, grant, we may find grace with thee, O Zeus», is the prayer that brings the prelude to a close (29), for «From the gods come all the means of mortal exploits; thanks to the gods are men wise and brave and eloquent» (41-42). Gildersleeve was perhaps not thinking specifically of the first Pythian, but his words marvellously unite, in the spirit of that ode, the life of Greece with the Games and the poetry devoted to them: «It is only in accordance with the principle of the organic unity of Hellenism that the acme of Greek lyric art should have embodied the acme of Greek festal life. The great games of Greece are as thoroughly characteristic of her nationality as the choral poetry which was the expression of them and the crown of them» (p. xxi).

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[32] See *RGTP*, pp. 185-196.

Ronsard's arrangement of the prelude of the first Pythian in the overture of his non-triadic ode *A sa lire* (I, 162, vv. 1-18) is poetically and intellectually one of the great achievements of his Pindaric period. It not only enters with insight and deepest sympathy into Pindar's dedication to μουσική, in the three-fold significance of that word, but it succeeds in no small measure in capturing what is most essential in the indissoluble synthesis of language, imagery, symbolism, and idea in which Pindar conveys his concept of the benign sovereignty of Zeus in sustaining every tendency toward the good and casting into outer darkness whatever is irremediably evil. We cannot expect Ronsard to have attained in a French ode intended for a French audience, separated by two millennia from the Archaic period of Greek literature, the organic unity of Hellenism at the acme of Greek lyric and festal life, but it was much to have understood so intimately what transcended even that vision, and to have reached to the heart of Pindar's Hellenic thought:

> Celui n'est pas le bien aimé des Dieus
> A qui deplaist ton chant melodieus.

The power of poetry to represent in beauty the substance of man's deepest emotions and thoughts is concentrated in the opening phrase of the second Olympian: 'Αναξιφόρμιγγες ὕμνοι, «Ye hymns that rule the lyre», which clearly subordinates the musical accompaniment to the words. If there were any doubt about Pindar's meaning, it should be removed by his prayer in the ninth Olympian (80-83), which affirms his conviction of the intimate dependence of poetic power upon invention in the fashioning of words:

> May I find words to lead others
> And be fit to ride in the Muses' chariot;
> May daring and power folow me in abundance.
> (tr. Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 12)

He prayed for a gift which he already bountifully possessed. «This opulence, this abundance of resource, shows itself in strength and in splendor», says Gildersleeve, who, indeed, with characteristic discernment, chooses the notion of splendor itself to exemplify the plenitude of Pindar's mastery of the poetic instrument: «The word splendor and all its synonyms seem to be made for Pindar. He drains dry the Greek vocabulary of words for light and... radiance» (p. xxxvi). Perhaps these observations would apply also to Pindar's paeans, dithyrambs, and processional songs, but they were elicited by his triumphal odes. In these, in the scenes and circumstances of their creation and performance, both in the arena and in the victor's city, much of what is quintessentially Hellenic may be found — the human and divine significance of the Games[33].

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[33] It may be worth remarking that Aristophanes of Byzantium, who «produced what was probably the first collected edition [of Pindar], divided the odes into sixteen books,

This emerges in the overture of the first Olympian more dazzlingly than in any other triumphal ode[34]. The Olympians stand at the beginning of the extant collection of Pindar's poetry probably because «Of the four athletic festivals for which Pindar wrote Epinicians the Olympian was held in the highest esteem... [he] calls it ἀέθλων κορυφάν, 'the peak of contests' (*O.*, 2, 13)».[35]

Chronological considerations did not determine the arrangement of the triumphal odes by the ancient editors. The first Olympian was composed for Hieron's victory in the horse-race in 476 B.C. more than a score of years after Pindar's initial poetic efforts. Alexandrian scholars placed it at the head of the Olympians perhaps because it was felt to be poetically the most significant of that group and because of the unsurpassed radiance of its prelude: «Water is excellent, and gold like blazing fire stands clear at night above imperious wealth.[36] But if of feats you would sing, my heart, seek than the sun no hotter radiant star by day in the vacant sky. Nor let us sing a contest nobler than the Olympian, whence the sounding hymn is flung around poets' wits, to chant the son of Kronos as we reach Hieron's rich felicitous hearth» (tr. Finley, pp. 51-52).

Pre-eminence in the Olympian games and the national renown that a victory in them conferred were for Pindar and for every Greek among their most brilliant attractions, but for him they were external to the profounder meaning of the contests. «The sun stands in relation to the Olympian games, and these in turn to Zeus, since it is to Zeus that poets' minds turn in contemplation of Olympia... the glint of gold characteristically marks for Pindar those moments when the divine transcendence touches this world... the gold which flashes like fire out of night is the god-given emergence of glory out of transcience...»[37]

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eight on divine, and eight on human themes». J.E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship*, I, 127.

[34] But with even greater profundity of feeling and significance, perhaps, in the prelude of the fifth Isthmian: «Mother of the Sun, Theia of many names, through thee mankind deems gold of mighty strength beyond all else...» tr. Finley, p. 53, who points out the similarity between the two overtures. «The mystic invocation to Theia», he later adds (p. 145), «comes as near as any passage to stating the source of Pindar's inspiration... the brilliance that here touches life is a mark of the divine... This is the light which blazes in the heroic nightfire of *O.*, 1... and in some way touches all victory». — Ronsard never mentions Theia, and the evidence that he knew the fifth Isthmian is negligible.

[35] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 162; cf. pp. 36, 204.

[36] Cf. Ol., III, 42.

[37] Finley, pp. 52-54; cf. Fränkel, p. 472: «The opening of the poem then is intended to inculcate the notion of a supreme value by examples from different fields, in order to elevate the victory now being celebrated into the class of supreme values.»

In recent times Pindaric scholarship has made notable advances in enlarging our understanding of the odes. Writing four centuries ago, scarcely thirty years after the printed text of Pindar had become available in Europe, Ronsard could not often attain a depth of comprehension comparable to that which has resulted from the slow accumulation of contributions by generations of scholars, who are still, it is fair to add, at loggerheads over the interpretation of certain aspects of the Theban's poetry. Ronsard had studied the first Olympian very assiduously, and the exterior beauties of the shining imagery of the prelude had not escaped him. He more than once attempted to capture some of the brilliance of Pindar's lines in his own triadic odes, but unfortunately he could hardly bring them to a glow. He had not felt their deeper significance.

In the Pindaric ode to the Cardinal de Guise, soon to become the Cardinal de Lorraine, he promises to build him an altar and to suspend above it a votive tablet

> Qui au pelerin etrange
> Racontera ta louange,
> Et la vertu qui reluit
> Par les ans de ta jeunesse,
> Comme l'or sur la richesse,
> Ou la Lune par la nuit.[38]
>
> (I, 81)

Elsewhere he assures Joachim du Bellay that his poetry may be compared in value to the universal standards of excellence visible in nature:

> Car tout ainsi que la mer [*sc.* eau] passe
> L'honneur d'un chaq'un élément,
> Et le souleil semblablement
> Les moindres feus du ciel éface,
> Ainsi apparoissent les traits
> Dont tu émailles les portraits
> De la riche peinture tienne
> Tant semblable au vif de la mienne...
>
> (I, 117)

Ronsard was perhaps somewhat more successful in sensing the mood of Pindar's allusion to the moon in the third Olympian. Heracles, son of Zeus, has brought back from the land of the Hyperboreans the olive-tree which was to provide shade for all men who attended the Olympian games and the wreath of victory for the triumphant contestants. «For already had the altars been consecrated in his father's honour, and in the midst of the month the Moon with her car of gold had at eventide kindled before him the full orb

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[38] The last verse may have been suggested by Ol., X, 73-75 — See *POR*, p. 128, *Pindar on shining or blazing honor.*

[ὀφθαλμόν, eye] of her light...» (19-20). In the non-triadic poem *A Madame Marguerite*, in which Ronsard vindicated his effort to introduce the Pindaric ode into French literature, he describes how the victorious athletes, crowned «de ceste feuille heureuse», awakened the music of the first poets,

> Lesquelz, au soir par l'assemblée,
> Quand l'œil de la lune doublée[39]
> Ardoit le voile obscur des cieux,
> Avec les flustes doulxsonnantes,
> Et les trompettes hault parlantes
> Louengeoyent les victorieux.[40]
>
> (III, 110)

It was in the *Ode de la Paix* (1550) that Ronsard achieved his happiest results in adapting certain of Pindar's radiant verses. When Arcesilas, king of Cyrene, won the chariot-race in 462 B.C., Pindar, in commemoration of the event, wrote the fifth Pythian ode in which he thus salutes the fortunate monarch: «O blest of Heaven! Arcesilas! From the first steps of thy famous life thou dost indeed seek... fair fame... by the help of Castor of the golden chariot, who, after the wintry storm, sheddeth beams of calm [καταιθύσσει] upon thy happy hearth» (5-11). «Kastor is here operative as the hero-god who patronised chariot-racing, and as one of the twin-brethren who saved mariners at sea, bringing sunlight after a storm; there is allusion here to the political storms that had shaken Cyrene.»[41]

Enough superficial resemblance existed between the political situations in Cyrene and France to induce Ronsard to make use of the fifth Pythian in composing his *Ode de la Paix*. In 462 B.C. Cyrene was recovering from the effects of an insurrection against Arcesilas (Sandys, p. 196); France in 1550 had just signed a treaty of peace with England (III, 3, n. 1). Pindar invokes the name of Castor as the semidivine hero who made possible the victory with the chariot and brought political peace to Cyrene, while Ronsard invokes the Christian God (v. 9) who had granted both the victory and the peace:

> Lequel (apres la longue horreur
> De Mars vomissant sa fureur,
> Et l'âpre venin de sa rage
> Sur ton païs noirci d'orage)
> Par l'effort d'un bras souverain,
> A fait ravaller la tempeste,
> Et ardre alentour de ta teste
> Un air plus tranquille & serain.
>
> (III, 4)

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[39] Ronsard may have misunderstood Pindar's meaning; see *RGL*, Part I, Chap. IX, n. 44.

[40] For Ronsard's adaptation of a passage in Isth., IV, 23-24, on the morning star shining among the others, see I, 67, vv. 37-42, and below, Chap. XIX, n. 102. Cf. I, 77, vv. 83-84; 92, vv. 41-44; 132, vv. 19-22.

[41] Farnell, II, 168-169.

In the last two verses Ronsard has succeeded admirably in finding a luminous equivalent for Pindar's καταιθύσσει. The word occurs only twice in Greek literature, both times in Pindar. The other occurrence is at Pyth., IV, 83. The fourth Pythian was also addressed to Arcesilas, it celebrated the same victory with the chariot in the Pythian games, it also makes reference to the factional strife in Cyrene, and of course, it immediately precedes the ode under discussion. The word καταίθυσσον is used in the fourth Pythian to describe the manner in which Jason's «unshorn hair fell in gleaming waves down his back.» In view of the close proximity of the two odes, and of their sharing a similar subject matter, it seems a fair guess that it was to this fortunate juxtaposition of texts that Ronsard was indebted for the beautiful image of vv. 17-18.[42]

The triumphal ode of Pindar fulfills its ordained design, in the words of John Finley, when it sings of «the god-given emergence of glory out of transcience».

The significant essence of the epinician ode is distilled in this phrase. Few interpretations of it could be superior to that which Gildersleeve provided, by anticipation, in discussing the scope of the triumphal ode: «The *epinikion* lifts the temporary victory to the high level of the eternal prevalence of the beautiful and the good over the foul and the base, the victor is transfigured into a glorious personification of his race, and the present is reflected, magnified, illuminated in the mirror of the mythic past» (p. xviii).[43] Pindar's thought, in its highest meditative reaches, though inspired by the circumstances of some particular victory, soars beyond victor, beyond the Games, even beyond Greece, to the nature and destiny of mankind, fleetingly touched by a divine transcendence in whose splendor the distinction between the momentary and the eternal, between the transcendent and the transient, is obliterated: «Creatures of a day, what is man? what is he not? Man is but a dream of a shadow; but, when a gleam of sunshine cometh as a gift of heaven, a radiant light resteth on men, aye, and a gentle life» (Pyth., VIII, 95-97).

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[42] The *Ode de la Paix* is notable for the frequency of its Pindaric imagery of flame; cf. III, 25, vv. 339-340 and n. 3; 28, vv. 375-380; 34, vv. 483-486 and n. 2. The first and third of these passages are discussed below in Chap. XIX, sec. iii, the third also in Chap. XVII, sec. i. But some of Ronsard's most effective poetry in this mode is neither Pindaric, nor even Hellenic. See, for example, I, 124, vv. 47-48; III, 50-53 (Ronsard's translation of a Latin ode by Dorat); 136, vv. 307-310 (Hesiodic); XI, 66, vv. 64-78, which Laumonier's note properly calls a «hymne du Soleil»; and of course, above all, the *Hymne du Ciel*, VIII, 140-149, one of Ronsard's masterpieces, studied so poetically by Germaine Lafeuille in *Cinq hymnes de Ronsard*, pp. 19-39.

[43] Cf. Croiset, pp. 223-224.

For Pindar, in his incessant broodings upon even the most glorious achievements of men, the flawless splendor of the gods remains beyond human attainment. At best, man may hope for a rare brightening of celestial light shadowed in mortality. «Time with its rolling days bringeth manifold changes; none but the sons of the gods are unscathed» (Isth., III, 18). The gods, «knowing neither sickness nor old age nor toils, have fled the deep-roaring passage of Acheron» (frag. 143, p. 601).

The thoughts of mortals must of necessity turn away from this vision — a warning indigenous to every Hellenic mind. «Changeful are the gusts of wind that blow on high. The bliss of man doth not proceed for long» (Pyth., III, 104-105), «Verily, the hopes of men are tossed, now high, now low, as they cleave the treacherous sea of vain falsehoods. But never yet hath any man on earth found a sure token sent from heaven to tell him how he shall fare in the future» (Ol., XII, 5-8). «Countless are the errors that hang over the minds of men» (Ol., VII, 24-25).

«On pourrait multiplier indéfiniment», says Croiset (p. 218), «les citations de ce genre. Il n'y a guère d'odes triomphales... où ces idées ne reparaissent. C'est la plainte éternelle de l'humanité souffrante... qui ne cesse de se faire entendre à travers les siècles».

The many passages in which Pindar speaks in somber tones, tempered in his greatest moments with a noble serenity, of the common lot which mortals must endure, in contrast with the deathless felicity of the gods, deeply stirred Ronsard at the outset of his career, and justified his arduous efforts in humanistic studies. It is not the least extraordinary circumstance of this literary relationship that the greatest strophe of the youthful Ronsard's Pindaric period, the last epode of *La Victoire de François de Bourbon*, «la première en date des odes pindariques» (I, 82, n. 2), grew out of the confluence and perfect fusion of many verses drawn from a number of Pindar's odes, including notably the eighth Pythian, the last of the aged Theban's triumphal poems:

Autour de la vie humaine
Maint orage va volant,
Qui ores le bien ameine
Ores le mal violant:
La face de la Fortune
Ne se montre aus Rois toute une,
Et jamais nul ne se treuve
Qui jusque à la fin epreuve
L'entiere felicité.
Les hommes journaliers meurent,
Les dieus seulement demeurent
Exentés d'aversité.[44]
(I, 89)

[44] See *POR*, pp. 115-117, for an analysis of the textual relationships between this passage in Ronsard and the parallel verses of Pindar.

These lines are the finest of Ronsard's Pindaric period. We might reproach him for failing to rise to that governed and superlatively humane optimism of the eighth Pythian, which could confidently gaze toward the divinely-given light as toward its proper and native region; but that would be almost to reproach him for not being Greek, for not being Pindar. Though they do not rise to this vision, these lines do reveal that when Pindar spoke in his most significant accents, the heart of Ronsard could be kindled, his imagination and literary gifts moved to find the means for lucid and sincere expression.

Was it coincidence, or the Pindaric habit of addressing words of timely admonition to athletes exulting in victory, that caused Ronsard to say in *La Victoire de Gui de Chabot*:

> Une nue d'erreur pleine
> Qui monte en nous, voluntiers
> Voilant la raison nous meine
> Esgarés des beaus sentiers:
> Nous fians (sos que nous sommes)
> Aus vens incertains des hommes
> Qui souflent pour nous tromper
> En cent sortes & manieres,
> Et aus faveurs journalieres
> Que le fer peut bien couper...
> Divers vens sont en mesme heure:
> Ore Iver, ores Printens:
> La vertu ferme demeure
> Encontre le heurt du tens.
>
> (I, 104-105; cf. I, 115, vv. 121-124)

These verses do not perhaps attain the poetic perfection, the emotional depth, the universality of vision of the epode last quoted, but genuine Pindaric tonalities are equally audible in both. A note by Laumonier on the word *journalieres* (p. 104, n. 2): «Comme à la fin de l'ode V précédente, journalières = éphémères», suggests that the great verses Ronsard had read toward the end of Pythian VIII were tolling in his thought when he was composing the odes of victory for both François de Bourbon and Gui de Chabot. The expressions «hommes journaliers» and «faveurs journalieres» are transcriptions of Pindar's ἐπάμεροι, «creatures of a day», «ephemerids», the poet's final evaluation of man: τί δέ τις; what is this nullity? «this quintessence of dust»? τί δ' οὔ τις; what is he not? «in apprehension how like a god!»

What Pindar, anticipating Hamlet by so many centuries, expressed a few years before his death in such dense and luminously clear words, he had uttered many years earlier in the prelude of the sixth Nemean in his fullest comment on the barrier-bond that divides and unites men and the gods: «One is the race of men, one the race of gods, and from one mother [Gaia, Earth] we both draw breath. Yet an utter diversity of power sundereth us, so that one

race is naught, while for the other Heaven's bronze abode endureth unshaken everlastingly. But none the less we draw near in some measure to the immortals by greatness of mind or form...» (tr. Norwood, p. 53).

The first strophes of Ronsard's ode *Au reverendissime Cardinal du Bellai* (II, 120-122), is virtually a paraphrase of this passage:

> Dedans ce grand monde où nous sommes
> Enclos generallement,
> Il n'i a tant seulement
> Qu'un genre des dieus, & des hommes.
>
> Eus, & nous n'avons mere qu'une,
> Tous par elle nous vivons,
> Et pour heritage avons
> Cette grand' lumiere commune.

In Ronsard's version, as in Pindar's, it is the nature of the mind of man that indicates a fellowship between him and the gods:

> L'esprit de nous qui tout avise,
> Des Dieus compaignons nous rend[45]...

and it is his mortality that divides them. But in the case of poets, among whom apparently the Cardinal was numbered (*RPL*, p. 40), this crucial distinction vanished:

> La vie aus dieus n'est consumée,
> Immortel est leur sejour,
> Et l'homme ne vit qu'un jour
> Fuiant comme un songe[46] ou fumée.
>
> Mais celui qui aquiert la grace
> D'un bien heureus écrivant,
> De mortel se fait vivant,
> Et au ranc des celestes passe
>
> Comme toi...
>
> (II, 121)

The prelude of the sixth Nemean belongs to a current of Hellenic thought which was to culminate in the psychological, religious, and ethical insights of Plato and Aristotle. «Au fond, ce qui domine toute la doctrine de l'âme humaine [chez Platon], c'est le sentiment que, par ses fonctions supérieures, la pensée de l'homme est directement unie au Divin.»[47] What differentiates

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[45] Cf. I, 99, v. 9; II, 4, v. 52. See Jean Pépin, *Idées grecques sur l'homme et sur Dieu* (1971), pp. 5-11.

[46] Cf. VI, 191, vv. 11-13 and n. 4.

[47] It is a measure of the immense intellectual distance to which Montaigne had to recede on this point from the position of Plato, Aristotle, and of his fellow-Catholic Ronsard, in

and exalts man above all created things is «cette aspiration inextinguible à une destinée plus haute, qui est le mobile suprême de l'humanité».[48] This doctrine is the final cause of Aristotle's ethical thought, which attains its definitive expression in the tenth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1177 b 30-34): «If then the intellect is something divine in comparison with man, so is the life of the intellect divine in comparison with human life. Nor ought we to obey those who enjoin that a man should have man's thoughts and a mortal the thoughts of mortality, but we ought so far as possible to achieve immortality, and do all that man may to live in accordance with the highest thing in him.»[49]

Thus Ronsard, by way of Pindar's sixth Nemean ode, joined a stream of thought which became a constant element in his own fundamental attitude with respect to the relationship between the human and the divine.[50] It may be found in the introductory verses of the *Elegie* of 1559 (X, 101-108), which in 1567 received the title of *L'Excellence de l'esprit de l'homme*. It is found again in the *Hymne de l'Esté* of 1563:

«Les dieux tout en un coup à leur age parviennent,
«Les hommes avec l'age en accroissance viennent:
«Car ils sont immortels,[51] les hommes d'icy bas
«Apres mille travaux sont subjects au trepas[.]

and in the profoundly intensified and deepened force of the 1587 variant of v. 180: «Des dieux enfans bastards croissent pour le trespas» (XII, 43). In the *Elegie à la Majesté du Roy mon maistre* Ronsard gratefully restores to ancient Greece, «Qu'onque en beauté terre ne fut plus belle... des Philosophes mere», the doctrine which he had acquired from her poets and thinkers:

... la Grece...
Dont l'ame vive, ingenieuse & clere
Abandonna la Terre (pesant lieu)
Et d'un grand cœur s'envola jusqu'à Dieu...
(XIII, 137)

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order to be able to say, «Nous n'aurons jamais assez bafoüé l'impudence de cet accouplage». *Apologie de Raimond Sebond*, in *Essais*, ed. Villey-Saulnier, p. 450. — See my article, «Man Humbled and Exalted: Montaigne's *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* and a Passage in Plato's *Timaeus*», in O un amy! *Essays on Montaigne in Honor of Donald M. Frame*, ed. by Raymond C. La Charité (Lexington, Kentucky, 1977), pp. 277-289.

[48] Albert Ribaud, ed. and tr., *Platon: Œuvres complètes*, t. X, *Timée, Critias* (1970), pp. 91-92.

[49] H. Rackham, ed. and tr., *Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* (London, New York, 1926), p. 617.

[50] In 1560, several years after his vociferous renunciation of the «repliz recourbez Des torrens de Pindare en profond embourbez» (VIII, 356), Ronsard returned to the prelude of the sixth Nemean for the opening verses of his *Epitafe d'André Blondet* (X, 308).

[51] «Le mot *ils* se rapporte aux dieux.» Note by Laumonier.

For Ronsard it was the Muses, divinities of poetry, literature, music, and the dance, of philosophy and of all intellectual activity, who symbolized and sustained that «ame vive, ingenieuse & clere» of Greece, and who claimed as their supreme solicitude

> D'une flame divine allumer les esprits...
> Et tousjours dans le ciel avoir l'ame attachée.
> (XVIII, 91)

A solicitude felt by Pindar when he wrote, «May we win the favour of the Muses, that... we may kindle that torch of song» (Isth., 43). A solicitude felt also by Ronsard in all the genuinely creative moments of his life, even to the end, as he was writing in accents indistinguishably Hellenic and Christian, the last verse of the last sonnet of his *Derniers vers*,

> Franc des liens du corps pour n'estre qu'un esprit.
> (XVIII, 181)

IV. The Sodality of Inspiring Divinities[52]

«L'inspiration est un don des dieux au poète, un privilège irremplaçable qui lui est accordé comme un don personnel... Rien d'étonnant par conséquent à ce que ses chants soient qualifiés à l'aide d'adjectifs comme θεσπέσιος (Nem., IX, 7) [divine], θεόμορος (*Ol.*, III, 10) [allotted by heaven], θεόδματος (*ibid.*, 7) [heaven inspired], voire ἱερός (fr. 194) [consecrated].»[53]

Among the philosophers of Greece Democritus appears to have been the first to hold that the greatest poets sang «μετ' ἐνθουσιασμοῦ καὶ ἱεροῦ πνεύματος, 'with inspiration and a holy breath'».[54] Plato described poetry as «the madness of those who are possessed by the Muses; which taking hold of a delicate and virgin soul, and there inspiring frenzy, awakens lyrical and all other numbers».[55] Even the sober Aristotle said ἔνθεον γὰρ ἡ ποίησις, poetry is full

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[52] See *RGTP*, Chap. VI, for a fuller treatment than is possible here of the development of Ronsard's attitude toward inspiration and technique. Cf. *Hist. de la Pl.*, IV, 147-150; Grahame Castor, *Pléiade Poetics* (Cambridge, Eng., 1964), pp. 49-50.

[53] Duchemin, pp. 29-30. The English definitions are Slater's. — An anonymous epigram of the *Greek Anthology* (IX, 184) begins: «Pindar, holy mouth [ἱερὸν στόμα] of the Muses.» W.R. Paton, ed. and tr., *The Greek Anthology with an English Translation* (London, 1958), III, 97.

[54] E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 82.

[55] *Phaedrus*, 244 and 245, tr. Jowett, cf. *Ion*, 534. — See *Paideia*, I, 40; but cf. Dodds, *loc. cit.*, and pp. 217-218, for comment on Plato's critical attitude toward claims of this nature.

of the god, «an inspired thing»,[56] and that the poet had to have «a touch of madness in him».[57]

As Jacqueline Duchemin has pointed out in her article on Plato and poetry, «sans parler de la Muse homérique ou des Piérides hésiodiques, tout cela vient en droite ligne de Pindare, qui, sans doute, n'en a pas formulé de façon abstraite la théorie, mais l'applique le plus nettement qu'il se peut».[58] In her book on Pindar (pp. 41, 337), she gives a convincing development to the thesis that the Theban singer had anticipated Plato's assertion that poets are inspired intermediaries in a chain of revelation originating with the gods and transmitted to mankind — a chain «dont Pindare, le premier à notre connaissance, a dénombré les magiques chaînons. Avant de transmettre à ses interprètes, au chef de chœur et au choreutes, et par eux à ses auditeurs, le poétique influx, le poète l'a reçu lui-même des dieux, d'Apollon — ou, par lui, de Zeus — par l'intermédiaire de deux groupes de déesses dont le rôle est de premier plan, les Muses et les Charites» (p. 337).

At the beginning of the most ambitious of his triumphal odes, the fourth Pythian for Arcesilas of Cyrene, victor in the chariot-race, Pindar invokes the Muse in imagery that brings to mind the «inspiration and holy breath» that Democritus had thought to be indispensable for the creation of great poetry:

> To-day, Muse, you must stand by the side of a friend,
> By the King of Kyrene, the land of good horses:
> And when Arkesilas holds his triumph
> Swell the gale of your songs[59]...
>
> (tr. Wade-Gery and Bowra)

The word πνεῦμα is not present here. Instead we find the expression οὖρον ὕμνων, «a fair wind of hymns», or «gale of songs». «The gale is the driving force which is to carry Pindar through his bold, long, and exacting enterprise, and in it the notion of the divine breath which sustains poets... is reinforced.»[60] It is reinforced even more positively in the sixth Olympian, when

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[56] *Rhetorica*, 1408 b 19 (tr. W. Rhys Roberts in vol. XI of the Oxford translation).

[57] *De Poetica*, 1455 a 32-33 (tr. Ingram Bywater in vol. XI of the Oxford translation). This is also the interpretation of S.H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (London, 1895), pp. 59, 368, and of J. Hardy, *Aristote: Poétique* (1969), p. 54. But see Gerald F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), p. 496, who holds that the phrase in which this expression occurs «has been too often quoted out of context, as if it were a general contribution to the grand debate over 'inspiration'». The discussion extends to p. 502.

[58] *Art. cit.*, (*RGL*, Part I, Chap. XI, n. 32), p. 24; cf. Edouard Des Places, *Pindare et Platon* (1949), p. 179.

[59] Cf. the prelude of the third Nemean and frag. 150, p. 601.

[60] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 11.

Pindar, employing a cognate of πνεῦμα, seems to sense his poetic powers enhanced καλλιρόοισι πνοαῖς (83), «with fair streams of inspiration».[61]

As much as he emphasized the positive force of divine influence, Pindar repeatedly and vigorously repudiated the notion that the poetic art could be acquired by indoctrination and training.[62] «The true poet», he says in the second Olympian (86-88), «is he who knoweth much by gift of nature [φυᾷ], but they that have only learnt [μαθόντες] the lore of song, and are turbulent and intemperate of tongue, like a pair of crows, chatter [γαρύετον] in vain against the god-like [θεῖον] bird of Zeus.» «That which cometh of Nature [φυᾷ] is ever best, but many men have striven to win their fame by means of merit that cometh from mere training [διδαχταῖς ἀρεταῖς]; but anything whatsoever, in which God hath no part [ἄνευ δὲ θεοῦ], is none the worse for being quelled in silence» (Ol., IX, 100-104). «It is by means of inborn valour [συγγενεῖ εὐδοξίᾳ] that a man hath mighty power, but he who hath learnt [διδάκτ'] all his lore, dwelleth in darkness, breathing changeful purposes, never entering the lists with a firm step, but essaying countless forms of prowess with ineffectual spirit» (Nem., III, 40-42). «By the gift of Nature [φυᾷ] standeth forth to view that noble spirit, which passeth from sires to sons [ἐκ πατέρων παισί]» (Pyth., VIII, 44-45).

The position adopted by Pindar in some of the most fundamental affirmations of his poetic credo, Ronsard, with the zeal of the neophyte, embraced as his own:

> Celui qui est endoctriné
> Par le seul naturel bien né
> Se haste de ravir le pris:
> Mais ces rimeurs qui ont apris
> Avec travail, peines, & ruses,
> Tousjours ils enfantent des vers
> Tortus, & courans de travers
> Par la carriere des Muses...
> (I, 111)

These verses are from Ronsard's Pindaric ode *A Jouachim du Bellai Angevin*. In the passage that follows immediately he seems to associate his friend with himself in a common poetic effort: two Pindaric eagles now soar in the literary skies of France:

> Eus [ces rimeurs] égualés à nos chants beaus,
> Ils sont semblables aus corbeaus

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[61] «Le souffle léger de l'inspiration» is A. Puech's translation.

[62] Norwood, p. 177: «The doctrinaires fall under trenchant, if not truculent, reproach...»

Lesquels desous l'ombre quaquetent
Contre deus aigles, qui aguetent
(Portans la foudre du grand Roi [Jupiter])
Le tens de ruer leurs tempestes
Desus les miserables testes
De ces criards palles d'éfroi.
(I, 111-112)

In «quaquetent» we surely hear an echo of Pindar's γαρύετον and an anticipation of Ronsard's attack on «ces petis lecteurs Poëtastres» who had assailed him for what he took to be frivolous reasons: «Il ne faut aussi que le volage lecteur me blâme de trop me louer, car s'il n'a autre argument pour médire que ce point là... tant s'en faut que je prenne égard à tel ignorant, que ce me sera plaisir de l'ouir japper, & caqueter, aiant pour ma deffence l'exemple de tous les Poëtes Grecs & Latins» (I, 47).

As one studies the essential passages in which Pindar expressed his thoughts on the nature of inspiration, one becomes aware of the extent to which his views reflected the complex realities of the creative experience, particularly its dependence on nature and the divine. Indeed, as Gildersleeve said, «We have not to do with the naïve». Pindar recognized that poetic promptings could be received and fruitfully propagated only within a naturally endowed spirit; that such endowment, divinely and hereditarily given, cannot by training be urged into existence from nonbeing; and that in the absence of a divine impulse, the creative process, and in fact any truly great undertaking, is doomed to sterility.[63]

The gods are the companions of every moment of poetic creation, as Ronsard had learned from the poet of Thebes.[64] «Thanks to the gods», Pindar says in the first verse of Isthmian IV, «I have countless paths opening on every side...» The fourth Olympian begins with an invocation to Zeus, whose Seasons, the Horae, had sent Pindar «to bear witness to the most exalted of all contests». In the ninth Nemean, celebrating the victory of Chromius of Aetna in the chariot-race, he appeals to the Olympian god and to his daughters who mediate between Zeus and the poets: «O father Zeus, I pray that I may sound the praises of this deed of prowess by the favour of the Graces, and that I may excel many a bard in honouring victory by my verses, shooting my dart of song nearest of all to the mark of the Muses» (53-55). The sixth paean (Sandys, p. 535), opens with an entreaty to a fellowship of inspiring divinities, Plato's «magique chaînons» that Jacqueline Duchemin has decribed: «O golden Pytho [*sc.* Apollo], that art famed for thine

[63] Cf. Gildersleeve, pp. xxxiii, 330; Fränkel, p. 473; Finley, p. 152.

[64] I, 99, v. 9; II, 4, v. 52; especially 120, vv. 9-10, and 121, n. 2.

oracles! I beseech thee, by the Olympian Zeus, with the Graces and Aphrodite, to welcome me at this sacred season as a prophet of the tuneful Pierides.»

For Pindar the complex realities of the creative experience were not exhausted by the generosity of nature, heredity, destiny,[65] or the privileged relationship of poets with the gods. «So far from thinking that the poet is a mere vessel into which inspired words are poured from some celestial source, Pindar recognizes that the poet has a task to perform by his own efforts through his inborn skill.»[66] He takes keen delight in the exercise of the technical aspects of his craft, to which he is as attentive as the Muse herself. He is pleased and comforted by her near presence as he begins a new ode,[67] and especially grateful to find her beside him when he discovers a way of adapting the Dorian rhythm to the «voice of festive revellers» (Ol., III, 4-6). The reference to the law (τεθμός) of his song in the fourth Nemean (33) is a clear and positive allusion to his technique of composition.

But, as Bowra says, «Pindar refrained... from calling poetry a τέχνα... not because it was derogatory but because it was inadequate. He needed a word which would stress more than mere skill, and he found it in σοφία... [which] has associations of social or moral or even aesthetic excellence... absent from τέχνη... The word [σοφία] keeps much of its old meaning [wisdom]. The poet is wise because he has a special knowledge, and this is not merely how to compose poetry correctly but how to reveal through it matters of first importance upon which he is uniquely informed.[68] Pindar asserts its superiority when he applies it to divine practitioners such as Apollo (*P.*, 1, 12) and the Muses (*N.*, 4, 2)».[69]

In preferring σοφία to τέχνη Pindar, like every thoughtful Greek, placed human values on an immeasurably higher plane than that implied in the mastery of a technique, no matter how perfect, for its own sake. «Dabei ist wichtig, dass er [Apollo] δίδωσι μοῖσαν, nicht bloss Dichtkunst, sondern er erzieht

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[65] Ol., IX, 26-27: «I, by the ordering of destiny, am tilling the choicest garden of the Graces.» Nem., IV, 41-43: «whatsoever excellence Lord Destiny assigned me, well I know that the lapse of time will bring it to its appointed perfection.»

[66] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 8.

[67] Ol., VII, IX, X; Pyth., I, IV; Nem., III, IV, IX; Isth., II, VI, VIII.

[68] When Hesiod told how the Muses taught him song, «This was not a metaphor, but reflected a genuine belief in an inspiration whereby the poet is granted deeper insight into the truth than other men.» W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, II, 6. — Cf. Croiset, p. 288.

[69] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 4-5. In the prelude of the fourth Nemean Pindar says that «songs are the wise daughters [σοφαὶ θύγατρες] of the Muses». — See also p. 33, paraphrasing Paean 7b, 13-15: «Men are blind if they do not pursue [the path of] wisdom [σοφίας ὁδόν] with the help of the Muses.»

einen ἀνὴρ μουσικός, verleiht jene Bildung, die für die Poesie und alles Höhere empfänglich macht...»[70]

«L'idéal classique transcende la technique... Il est peut-être utile d'entendre les Grecs insister sur la finalité humaine qui seule peut légitimer toute activité spéciale. Il y a un terrible impérialisme au sein de toute technique[71]: en vertu de sa logique propre, elle tend à se développer selon sa ligne en elle-même et pour elle-même, et finit par asservir l'homme qui l'exerce: qui ne mesure aujourd'hui [1948] à quelle inhumanité peut conduire la science chez le savant, la biologie chez le médecin qui oublie qu'il doit guérir des hommes, la science politique chez l'homme d'Etat qu'une doctrine trop sûre rend si facilement implacable? Les classiques nous répètent que toute institution, toute connaissance, toute technique ne doivent jamais devenir une fin en soi: maniées par des hommes, au service de l'homme, elles doivent toujours se subordonner et dans leur exercice et dans leurs résultats à cette valeur suprême: l'humain.»[72]

There is no reference in these lines either to poetry or to Pindar, but he would not have disavowed the thought they propose. This is fundamentally what he was saying when he repudiated the technicians of poetry, the μαθόντες, and this is surely what Ronsard meant when he in turn repudiated the *rimeurs*, the *versificateurs*, the *poëtastres*. At the end of his life, writing from a wealth of living experience, Ronsard repeated the thought that he had acquired from Pindar in the beginning, that learning the art of versification does not suffice for the creation of a genuinely human poetry: «Tout ceux qui escrivent en Carmes, tant doctes puissent ils estre, ne sont pas Poëtes. Il y a autant de difference entre un Poëte & un versificateur, qu'entre... un venerable Prophete & un Charlatan vendeur de triacles» (XVI, 335). No doubt there was a justified exhilaration for Ronsard and his colleagues in attempting to master some of the technical aspects of the Pindaric ode, even though, given the incommensurable differences between the Greek and French metrical systems, that «mastery» could touch only the most superficial elements of Pindar's prosody. But what drew them to the writers of Greece and Rome was the «finalité humaine» of the vision of the classical authors. For it was in virtue of that alone that a poet might aspire to the quality of «venerable Prophete», that a transcendent revelation implying some degree of participation in the divine was possible. The lesson had been learned by the artists

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[70] Willamowitz, p. 382, commenting Pyth., V, 65-67.

[71] Cf. Laumonier's reference to the «technique tyrannique des Rhétoriqueurs», *RPL*, p. 341, end of n. 6 from p. 340.

[72] Marrou, p. 334; his *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'antiquité* was first published in 1948; I quote from the sixth edition, 1965.

of Italy before it was learned once again by the poets of France. «Lorsque les peintres du XV^e siècle italien voyaient exhumer du sol romain des marbres antiques, à ces artistes consciencieux et fervents, qui n'avaient appris à la représenter que sous les velours et les brocarts, la figure humaine apparaissait une œuvre divine. Pareillement, lorsque nos jeunes érudits devinèrent enfin, dans les orateurs et les poètes de l'antiquité, les accents de la parole humaine, qu'on n'entendait plus depuis si longtemps que diminuée et travestie par le jeu de la prosodie et de la rhétorique, ils éprouvèrent un sentiment d'adoration.»[73]

V. «Voila pour quoi Euterpe la sacrée M'a de mortel fait compagnon des Dieus»

That feeling of adoration is at once evident in Ronsard's earliest ode, *A son Luc* (II, 155-162), in which he compares the poet to a «ministre des dieus» (vv. 41-45). The ode, which is deeply indebted to Horace, antedates Ronsard's Pindaric studies. He informs us that it was composed either in 1540 or in the period from 1541 to 1543 (II, 155, n. 2). But perhaps one does not hazard too much in saying that with respect to certain fundamental attitudes toward poetry, the imitation of Horace may sometimes create an obligation at one remove to Pindar or to other Greek lyric poets.[74] The Theban might never have expressed his sense of gratitude to the gods in quite the manner of a Ronsard or a Horace, but he could not have failed to recognize a sentiment which he had felt and uttered long before either:

> Dieus! de quelle oblation
> Aquiter vers vous me puis-je,
> Pour remuneration
> Du bien receu qui m'oblige?
> Certes je suis glorieus
> D'estre ainsi ami des Dieus,
> Lesquels m'ont fait recevoir
> Le meilleur de leur sçavoir
> Pour me paistre, & m'en nourrir...
> (II, 161-162)

The «sentiment d'adoration» experienced by the poets of the Pléiade when they perceived a possible fellowship with the gods in the accents of

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[73] Henri Franchet, *Le Poète et son œuvre d'après Ronsard* (1923), pp. 20-21.

[74] A score of books and articles have been devoted to the comparison of Horace and Pindar. See Douglas E. Gerber, *A Bibliography of Pindar, 1513-1966* (Monograph 26 of the American Philological Association, Cleveland, 1969), pp. 147-148. See also *RGL*, Part I, Chap. X, n. 32.

human speech becomes quite explicit in Ronsard's non-triadic ode *A Joachim du Bellai Angevin*:

Celui qui ne nous honore
Comme profettes des dieus,
Plein d'un orgueil odieus
Les dieus il meprise encore,
Et le ciel qui nous decore
De son tresor le plus beau,
Nous mariant au troupeau
Que le saint Parnase adore.

Une ardante jalousie
De leurs presens les plus dous,
Se laissant glisser dans nous
Chatouille la poësie,
Qui darde la fantasie
De leurs prestres agités,
Jusque au sein des deités
Dont l'amour les ressasie.

De-là, revolans au monde
Comblés de segrés divers,
Ils chantent par l'univers
D'une vois où dieu abonde,
Et l'ardeur de leur faconde
Sert d'oracles, & sont faits
Les ministres plus parfaits
De la deité parfonde.

(I, 144-145)

On readily discerns in these verses Ronsard's readings in Plato and his welcome acceptance of an idea which brings poets into close relationship with the divine. In the ode to l'Hospital, as Henri Chamard says, Ronsard, «enrichissant la pensée de Pindare par des emprunts faits à Platon, a traduit de la façon la plus complète sa conception du génie poétique».[75] Jupiter, in his words to the Muses, declares that if the poet, untouched by the god's warmth,

Vouldra chanter quelque chose,
Il voira ce qu'il compose
Veuf de grace, & de grandeur:
Ses vers naistront inutilz,
Ainsi qu'enfans abortifz
Qui ont forcé leur naissance,
Pour monstrer en chacun lieu
«Que les vers viennent de Dieu,
«Non de l'humaine puissance.

(III, 145; cf. VIII, 353)

[75] *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 369.

Thus Ronsard had soon learned that the companionship of the inspiring divinities cannot be had on demand. In the years of his poetic maturity he was more than ever aware that without the creative stimulus of their presence, the pen fell from his hand. He was reliving the experience of Pindar, unable to create an ode «unless the Muse in the first place gives him something to work with. He is very far from suggesting that poetry can be created by an act of will whenever he chooses. He depends on the Muse for his first impulse and his sustained effort, for the material with which he works and for the spirit in which he handles it. He believes that she sends the mood which enables him to exert his inborn powers and write».[76]

In several moving lines of the *poëme* to Jean de Belot (1569), which Ronsard eventually came to call *La Lyre*, he expresses the grief of the poet, forsaken by the Muses to his own inadequate resources, who is compelled to abandon converse with the gods:

> Je fuy la chambre oubliant le soucy
> De la fureur qui me tenoit en serre,
> Et lors du Ciel je devalle en la terre,
> Ah! & en lieu de vivre entre les Dieux,
> Je deviens homme à moy-mesme odieux.
> (XV, 21)

Nothing arouses his astonishment, and no doubt his scorn, as much as those poetasters who are able to prattle in verse at will:

> Et m'esbahis de ceux ausquelz il est
> Pront[77] de verser des vers quand il leur plaist.
> (*Loc. cit.*)

But soon and late Ronsard was himself the victim of an equally serious illusion — that the frenzy or ecstasy attributed to the Pythia,[78] the μανία of the Muses of which he had read in Plato,[79] and the «amabilis insania» of the Muse that he had encountered in Horace,[80] if it did not come of its own accord, could be induced by an effort of histrionic vehemence. The first strophe of the Pindaric ode to Catherine de Médicis, dating from 1547 or 1548, is the earliest example of this simulated ardor of inspiration:

> Je suis troublé de fureur,
> Le poil me dresse d'horreur,
> D'une ardeur mon ame est pleine:

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[76] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 8.

[77] «Latinisme, *promptum est* = il est facile.» Note by Laumonier.

[78] W.K.C. Guthrie in *OCD*, p. 262, col. 1, s.v. *Delphic oracle*; cf. M.P. Nilsson, *Greek Piety*, tr. from the Swedish by H.J. Rose (Oxford, 1948), p. 41.

[79] *Phaedrus*, 245 A.

[80] *Odes*, III, iv, 5-6.

Mon *estomac est pantois*,
Et par son canal ma vois
Peut se degorger à peine,
Une deité m'emmeine:
Fuiez peuple, qu'on me laisse,
Voici venir la déesse,
Je la sen entrer en moi[81]:
Heureus celui qu'elle garde,
Et celui qui la regarde
Dans son temple où je la voi.
(I, 65; cf. III, 54; VII, 29-30)

Thirty years later, in the prelude to the *Panegyrique de la Renommée* for Henri III (1579), the Pindaric form has been discarded, but the substance has remained essentially the same: His heart beats uncontrollably, Apollo calls to him from Parnassus, and he hears the sound of the god's lyre and bow. He cries out:

Fuyez peuple fuyez[82]: des Muses favory
J'entre sacré poëte au palais de HENRY...
J'ay les yeux esblouyz, tout le cerveau me tremble,
J'ay l'*estomac panthois*...
(XVIII, 2; cf. p. 120)

Except by hazardous and quite improbable inference from Pindar's appeal to Pytho at the beginning of the sixth Pythian, and relatively rare and moderately worded allusions to the compelling nature of the creative impulse (e.g. Nem., IV, 35), there appears to be nothing in his triumphal odes, or even in the dithyrambs known to us, to suggest that Pindar experienced and wrote under the influence of a «fureur» like that which «inspired» Ronsard in the ode to Catherine de Médicis or in the *Panegyrique* to her son. Pindar would have been dismayed by anything so violently artificial and contrived.

Paul Laumonier's impeccable good taste protested against Ronsard's extravagances: «Mais pourquoi faut-il que Ronsard ait renchéri sur Pindare et Platon, en représentant le poète dans son délire même, dans sa crise de fureur sacrée, comme une pythonisse vaticinant sur le trépied du temple d'Apollon delphien?... Enthousiasme factice, cela est trop visible; procédé artificiel, que Ronsard ne trouvait pas dans Pindare et que Pindare aurait rejeté comme indigne de sa Muse sereine. C'est un méchant tour que lui ont joué là ses réminiscences de Callimaque, de Lycophron, de Virgile, d'Horace, de Claudien, et surtout du Byzantin Marulle, qui me semble avoir

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[81] Ronsard is ἔνθεος, the Muse has taken possession of him. «For Pindar it is not the poet but the Muse who is possessed.» Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 13.

[82] See XVIII, 2, n. 1. Marcassus may have found Ronsard's source for this twice-repeated cry in Virgil's «Procul ô procul este profani», (*Aeneid*, VI, 258), but the ultimate source must have been, as Laumonier suggested (I, 66, n. 1), the *Hymn to Apollo* of Callimachus (v. 2): ἐκάς, ἐκὰς ὅστις ἀλιτρός, «away, away, he that is sinful!»

groupé et développé dans les vingt premiers vers de son *Hymne au Soleil*[83] ce que ses modèles gréco-latins ne lui présentaient qu'à l'état embryonnaire, diffus ou fragmentaire. Ronsard croyait pourtant bien *pindariser* en prenant ainsi à la lettre les façons de parler symboliques de Pindare et de Platon, et en forçant jusqu'à l'outrance leurs métaphores. Mais Pindare, je le répète, aurait sûrement désavoué ce disciple troublé et haletant, ce 'fou de sens rassis', s'échauffant à froid et criant comme un forcené[84] à la divinité envahissante:

> Heureus celui qui ta folie affolle[85]

Il aurait simplement dit avec Hésiode: Heureux celui que chérissent les Muses, car un doux langage coule de ses lèvres.»[86]

After his first *crise de forcènement* Ronsard might have done well to listen to the calm voice of Jacques Peletier, who had written in his *Art poëtique* of 1555: «Car les Muses ne se veulent point avoir par force: il faut attendre le Dieu à venir: il faut epier cette sainte chaleur.»[87] Ronsard seems for a time to have retained Peletier's thought. In 1556 he defined poetry in almost the same words as

> Un don venant de Dieu, que par force on ne peut
> Aquerir si le Ciel de grace ne le veut.
> (VIII, 353)

But the solicitations of Court life were too demanding, and in the *Panegyrique* Ronsard «s'echauffa à froid» for Henri III exactly as he had done for Catherine de Médicis a generation earlier.

In the same passage of his theory of poetry, Peletier was careful to leave no doubt that the «sainte chaleur» did not by itself assure the creation of poetry. «La Nature», he said, «bien demande le secours et la main artisane». A limited reading of Ronsard's early writings, verse and prose, and especially a too exclusive reliance on some of the positions expressed in the odes to Du Bellay and l'Hospital, might easily create the impression that for the poet of Vendôme the «sainte chaleur» of divine inspiration was all that mattered. But there is much evidence from the earliest period and throughout Ronsard's life to prove that both the craftsman and the theoretician were too discerning to allow him to maintains so highly romantic a notion of poetic creativity. In the first of several odes that he addressed to

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[83] Alessandro Perosa, ed., *Michaelis Marulli Carmina* (Zurich, 1951), pp. 136-137.

[84] Ronsard's word: I, 117, v. 164.

[85] I, 175, v. 21.

[86] *RPL*, pp. 341-342. The reference to Hesiod is in *Theogony*, 96-97.

[87] Boul., p. 75.

Du Bellay, and which may date from as early as 1547, Ronsard told the comrade who was soon himself to say «le naturel n'est suffisant»[88] that the inspiration even of a Homer offered no promise of imperishable renown unless nourished by the toil, «la main artisane», that is inseparable from the poetic craft (II, 66). Even as he prided himself in 1553 on the rapidity with which «le Destin qui tout en tous dispose» had granted him the mastery of «la vieille trace Des premiers pas de Pindare & d'Horace», he assured La Péruse, in words reminiscent of Pindar's discovery of a new way of treating the Dorian rhythm (Ol., III, 4-6), that he had labored

> ... de savoir sus ses cordes élire
> Quelle chanson i [*sc.* la Lire] peut bien acorder,
> Et quel fredon ne s'i peut encorder.
> (V, 260)

Ronsard was in fact at all times a gifted and thoroughly committed craftsman. It was one thing, in his youthful enthusiasm for Pindar and for certain of Pindar's ideas, imperfectly grasped, to assert the autonomy of inspiration as implying the total freedom of the artist from formal and technical obligations, to be proud of one's success in adopting the «beau désordre» of Pindar, and quite another to refute cogently those who, like the Huguenot polemicists, made the rejection of those obligations the ground of their attack. It was against them that a more mature Ronsard invoked in 1563 an «art caché qui ne semble pas art Aux versificateurs», that he described the «Poëtes gaillards» as possessing an «artifice à part», and above all, that he assimilated «artifice» with «art» and both with «une libre contrainte» (XI, 160). The voice that speaks here is not that of the young novice who has measured his gifts against the exacting requirements of his art and arrogantly found his native endowment more than abundant. It is the voice of the craftsman whose accumulating experience has taught him that the mastery of so demanding an art is not given as a heavenly grace to those who, in the gaiety of their hearts, lightly ask it of Zeus, or Apollo, or the Muse. Surely it is the slow ripening of these reflections in his mind that explains the introductory remarks of Ronsard's *Art poëtique* in which the original conflict of principles is still visible. While admitting, as Pindar had more than once asserted, the impossibility of teaching poetry by precept «pour estre plus mental que traditif», Ronsard now realizes, with greater awareness than in earlier times of a complementary aspect of Pindar's thought, that the art of poetry, even in its «admirables inconstances» (I, 48) is, after all, responsive to certain rules revealed by «l'artifice humain, experience & labeur» (XIV, 3).

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[88] *Def.*, II, iii.

In the second Olympian Pindar wrote σοφὸς ὁ πολλὰ εἰδὼς φυᾷ (86), «The true poet is he who knoweth much by gift of nature». On this verse Jacqueline Duchemin astutely observed (p. 37): «Les mots εἰδὼς φυᾷ [knowing by nature] pourraient au premier abord passer pour contradictoires: cependant... il y a deux sources de connaissance, et celle qui consiste à apprendre ne vaut rien à côté de l'autre; Pindare, lui, *sait de naissance*... le mot [φυᾷ] signifie tout au moins qu'il y a en lui comme un élan vital, une poussée... de *connaissance* qui ne lui vient pas du dehors; une véritable révélation lui est donnée par l'intermédiaire de ce sens interne que seuls possèdent certains hommes favorisés des dieux...» (my emphasis).

What the σοφός, the poet, possesses is, of course, σοφία,[89] wisdom or knowledge revealed to him by the gods. When Ronsard in 1549 described the poet as

> Celui qui est *endoctriné*
> *Par le seul naturel bien né...*
> (I, 111)

he demonstrated a remarkable understanding of this aspect of Pindar's thought. In the editions of 1567-1584, however, he was no longer satisfied to translate σοφός by the amorphous *celui* — the verse is transformed to read «Le bon Poëte endoctriné». A further deepening of Ronsard's understanding of Pindar is observable in the posthumous variant of 1587:

> Le Poëte heureusement bien-né
> Par la Nature endoctriné...

What did Ronsard mean by *endoctriner*? For Huguet the meaning was *instruire*, and the noun *doctrine* meant *instruction, éducation, connaissance, science, savoir, érudition*. For Laumonier *doctrine* meant *science acquise* (*RPL*, p. 421, n. 3), for Chamard, *culture* (*Def.*, p. 371).

Thus, from a very early date Ronsard had interpreted a passage crucial for a comprehension of Pindar's attitude toward lyric poetry in a manner that revealed a sensitive appreciation of the Theban's fundamental position. Perhaps he was inclined by nature to sympathize with this view, for in his first French ode, years before his training in Greek had begun, he was already

> glorieus
> D'estre ainsi ami des Dieus,
> Lesquels m'ont fait recevoir
> Le meilleur de leur sçavoir...
> (II, 161-162)

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[89] Slater defines σοφός as *wise, skilled*, specifically, *skilled in poetry*; σοφία as *art, wisdom*, esp. *poetic art, skill.*

Ronsard could not at any time, without betraying his deepest convictions, abandon his belief in the reality of inspiration, but he was able to refer to Belleau, upon the latter's entrance into the Pléiade, as one who understood that the *ravissement* that came to poets from the Muses lived in a harmonious affinity with the knowledge that they granted. In the *Elegie à Chretophle de Choiseul* (1556), famous for its «repudiation» of Pindar (VIII, 356), it is impossible not to be struck by the presence of a continuing Pindaric influence on Ronsard's poetic theory when he describes Belleau as one

> Qui as (*comme bien né*) *ton naturel suivy*,
> Et que les Muses ont naïvement ravy
> Aux contemplations de leurs sciences belles,
> Te faisant enfanter choses toutes nouvelles,
> Sans imiter que toy, & la gentille erreur
> Qui t'alume l'esprit d'une *docte fureur*...
> (VIII, 354)

In his revision of the prelude of this elegy for the 1578 edition Ronsard replaced ten verses severely critical of contemporary poets by two new ones which describe them as

> Poussez plus d'une *ardeur* que polis de *doctrine*,
> *Le plus certain rempart de l'humaine poictrine*.
> (VIII, 352, var.)

Ardeur[90] and *doctrine*, which seem at first sight as contradictory as the equivalent principles in Pindar, are for Ronsard, when they exist in proper balance, the inseparable correlatives of poetic creativity. The poet who possesses both in equal measure is εἰδὼς φυᾷ, he «knows by nature», or, as Ronsard will say in his final revision of the ode to Du Bellay, he is «heureusement bien-né Par la Nature endoctriné». Uncontrolled inspiration, he seems to be telling us in the variant of the elegy to Choiseul, is a dangerous gift for poets. Learning and culture, *doctrine*, must be invoked as a restraint upon the ungovernable licence of an inspiration that listens to none but its own wild voice. This will remain his settled conviction to the end. As Binet tells us in the second edition of his biography, «Sur ses derniers jours il se plaignoit fort de ne sçay quelles façons d'escrire, et inventions fantastiques et melancholiques d'aucuns de ce temps... et qui ne se r'apportent non plus que les songes entrecoupez d'un frenetique, ou d'un fiévreux, duquel l'imagination est blessée... Ils ont, me disoit-il, l'esprit plus turbulent que rassis, plus violent qu'aigu, lequel imite les torrens d'hyver, qui attrainent des montaignes autant de boüe que de claire eauë...» (*Vie.*, p. 38-39).

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[90] More often Ronsard will say *fureur*, or rarely even *frenaisie*, under the influence of Plato's μανία. But sometimes, as in the preceding quotation from the elegy to Choiseul, the word is qualified by *docte*; cf. XI, 161, v. 896.

Binet has preserved a fragment of verse from Ronsard's last days in which he castigates the poets who have enlisted in the service of the anti-Muse. «Mais parlant de quelques autres, qui suivants cette bande[91] prostituent les Muses, et les habillent et deguisent à leur mode, il ne peut un jour se tenir qu'il ne me dictast sur le champ ce vers:

Bien souvent, mon Binet, la troupe sacrilege
Des filles de Cocyte[92] entre dans le college
Des Muses, et vestant leurs habits empruntez
Trompent les plus rusez de caquets eshontez...
Tels farouches esprits ont un coup de marteau[93]
Engravé de naissance au milieu du cerveau,
Empeschant de prevoir de quel saint artifice
On appaise les Sœurs pour leur faire service...»

(*Vie*, pp. 39-40; *L.*, XVIII, 292-293)

The «sainte chaleur» of inspiration which, Peletier had said in 1555, demanded the moderating influence of «la main artisane», found as its countervailing principle in Ronsard's ultimate reflections, an equally «saint artifice».

Ronsard's final *Preface sur la Franciade* was of course not addressed to lyric poets, though it could in part have been read profitably by them. Pindar would have welcomed Ronsard's description of heroic poetry as «un enthousiasme». The word is nowhere to be found in the pages of the Theban poet, but a sense of the presence of the divine is everywhere in his triumphal odes. As the interpreter or prophet of the college of the Muses, of the sodality of inspiring divinities, Pindar may surely be called ἔνθεος, and so too, in his most inspired moments, may Ronsard, the «compagnon des Dieus». In Ronsard's final definition of the poet Pindar would have recognized everything that he himself had included in the meaning of σοφός: «Donc Lecteur, celuy qui... aura une bouche sonnant plus hautement... qui aura l'esprit plus plein de prudence & d'advis, & les conceptions plus divines... donne luy le nom de Poete» (XVI, 345).

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[91] «... de ces singes imitateurs...» *Vie*, p. 39, lines 18-19.

[92] «Ce sont les Furies. Imitation de Virgile, qui appelle l'une d'elles, Alecto, *Cocytia virgo* (*En.*, VII, vers 479)». *Vie*, p. 198 — Mythology gives them a different origin. «Elles sont nées des gouttes du sang dont la mutilation d'Ouranos imprégna la terre.» Grimal, p. 146, s.v. *Erinyes*.

[93] Huguet, s.v. *marteau*, defines *coup de marteau* as *folie*, and quotes as an example the present passage.

CHAPTER XVII

LYRIC PRAISE IN THE ODES OF PINDAR AND RONSARD

I. The General Theory of Lyric Praise: *Gloria deis et hominibus*

Toward the end of the *Republic* (607 A), in a passage which demonstrates his profond attachment to poetry, Socrates reaffirms one of the noble illusions upon which he would found his ideal society: «We are ready to acknowledge that Homer is the greatest of poets and first of tragedy writers; but we must remain firm in our conviction that hymns to the gods and praises of famous men are the only poetry which ought to be admitted into our State.» (Cf. *Laws*, 801 E).

We do not know whether Pindar would have accepted this program of state regulation and censorship of poetry, but the other principle asserted here — *gloria in excelsis deis et in terra hominibus* — is one that he and Socrates and Plato and every educated Greek had encountered in Homer. All the triumphal odes of Pindar are devoted to the exaltation of the gods and to singing the glory of heroes. The Theban poet could never forget that Achilles had preferred to die young and to leave a glorious name rather than endure a long existence without honor (*Iliad*, IX, 410-416).[1] «L'amour de la vie devient dès lors principe d'héroïsme: on apprend à placer la vie assez haut pour la sacrifier à la gloire, qui la perpétuera.»[2] In the first Olympian ode,

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[1] Croiset, p. 224.

[2] Paul Mazon, *Introduction à l'Iliade* (1948), p. 299. Cf. Croiset, pp. 222-224; Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 95-96, 177-178. — How far Montaigne was from adopting the Hellenic evaluation of glory may be judged from the first sentence of his essay (I, 41), *De ne communiquer sa gloire*: «De toutes les resveries [sottises] du monde, la plus receuë et plus universelle est le soing de la reputation et de la gloire, que nous espousons jusques à quitter les richesses, le repos, la vie et la santé, qui sont bien [*read* biens] effectuels [réels] et substantiaux, pour suyvre cette vaine image et cette simple voix [mot] qui n'a ny corps ny prise.» Villey-Saulnier edition, p. 255, whose notes supplied the bracketed material. The sentence quoted is the epigraph of the article by G. Tronquart, «Montaigne et la gloire», in the *Bull de l'Assoc. Guillaume*

Pelops, though facing the probability of death at the hands of Oenomaus, elects to engage him in a chariot-race in the hope of winning Hippodamia for his bride. He is moved by the same ideal as Achilles: «As all men must needs die, why should one, sitting idly in darkness, nurse without aim an inglorious old age?» (82-83).

Ronsard was reminded of this sentiment in *La victoire de Gui de Chabot*, in which the recipient of the ode, winner of a duel with François de Vivonne, seigneur de la Chasteigneraie, is presumed to paraphrase and amplify Pelops' thought thus:

> Une ame lache & couarde
> Au peril ne se hazarde,
> Et d'où vient cela que ceus
> Qui pour mourir ici vivent,
> L'honneste danger ne suivent
> A la vertu paresseus?
> Miserable qui se laisse
> Engloutir à la vieillesse,
> Heureus deus & trois fois l'homme
> Qui dedaigne les dangers,
> De lui la gloire se nomme
> Par les peuples etrangers.
>
> (I, 101-102; cf. XVII, 5, vv. 61-66)

The same theme returns in the final strophe:

> O Chabot bien peu je prise
> De gaigner une entreprise
> Que la fortune delivre
> A chaq'un egalement:
> Mais c'est beaucoup que de vivre
> Par elle eternellement.
>
> (I, 107)

Here it is Ronsard who speaks, echoing the voice of Pindar: «But deeds of prowess, apart from peril, win no honour either among men (on land) or on board the hollow ships, whereas if any fair fruit cometh of toil, there are many who remember it» (Ol., VI, 9-11). These were the alternatives between which the life and death of Achilles had been determined. Corneille was to express the same thought in a single lapidary verse: «A vaincre sans péril, on triomphe sans gloire.»[3]

Budé, 4e sér., No. 2 (1960) 265-271 — Few of Montaigne's contemporaries, least of all Ronsard and his colleagues, shared his scorn for glory, and not many of his successors in the following century; see Leonora Cohen Rosenfield, «Glory and Anti-glory in France's Age of Glory», *FRSS*, pp. 283-307.

[3] *Le Cid*, Act II, sc. iii, v. 434. Laumonier wrote this verse in the margin of his personal copy of *L.*, I, 107.

But there are defeats more victorious than victory. For Hector, who died at the hands of Achilles in defence of Troy, «did glory bloom beside the streams of Scamander» (Nem., IX, 39-40). The significance of this example entered permanently into the values of the Greek people. «For whoso... defendeth his dear father-land against the hailstorm of blood... let him know assuredly that he is causing the greatest glory to grow for the race of his fellow-townsmen» (Isth., VII, 27-29).

The glory of a great hero, however, is not confined within the limits of his own town. «There is no city so rude in speech... that it knoweth not the fame of the hero Peleus» (Isth., VI, 24-25), a sentiment equally valid for all of the legendary heroes of Greece. The victor in the Games did not stand in the shadow of the heroes, but in their radiance, a radiance that only the gods could grant, and whose denial reduced life to the dream of a shadow. «O mother of the Sun-god, Theia of many names! for thy sake... in the contests of the games, he it is that reapeth the fame for which he yearneth, whose hair is wreathed with many a garland, when he hath been victorious with his hands, or with swiftness of feet. But it is owing to the gods that the prowess of men is approved» (Isth., V, 1-10).

The typical Pindaric ode, says Croiset (p. 363) begins and ends with praise. A fundamental law that the lyric poet was obliged to observe was the practice of εὐφημία, «qui exprime le contraire de la médisance... Le poète lyrique ne sait que louer, et ne médit jamais».[4]

But the praise had to be judicious and discriminating, attuned to the *bienséances* of each situation, «avec un juste sentiment [de la part du poète] de ce qu'il devait aux autres et de ce qu'il se devait à lui-même».[5] Whether addressed to a powerful tyrant or to a young wrestler or runner, exaggerated praise was proscribed «by the dread of Nemesis, by that law of balance which kept the Greek in awe of presumption... The victor's garland... demands the song, but the song is not such a trumpet-blast as would blow the garland off the victor's head, if not the victor's head as well. That is modern eulogy».[6]

Pindar's odes are more than a texture of the praises of victors in the Games and in other actions — they contain innumerable passages from which one may derive an excellent idea of what the eulogistic function meant to the poet, particularly its relationship to the divine. In the prayer to the Muse that opens the third Nemean he says, «Various deeds thirst[7] for

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[4] Croiset, p. 148.

[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 274.

[6] Gildersleeve, p. xxv.

[7] Cf. Pyth., IX, 103-104.

various rewards; but victory in the games loveth beyond all things the meed of song, the fittest accompaniment of garlands and of valiant exploits. Grant thou thereof no grudging share, the fruit of mine own fancy; and, in honour of the ruler of the cloud-wrapt heaven, do thou, his daughter, begin a hymn approved of all, while I shall blend it with the lays of those singers, and with the lyre».

It was a natural progression in the seventh Isthmian (23-26) to advance from the praise of Strepsiades, the nephew, winner in the pancratium, to the eulogy of Strepsiades, the uncle, who had given his life in defense of Thebes. The young victor «is lit up with glory by the violet-tressed Muses; and to his uncle of the self-same name hath he given a share in the garland, even to him for whom Ares of the brazen shield mingled the draught of death; and yet honour is laid up in recompense for the brave».

To judge from his triumphal odes, Pindar was not troubled by the theoretical problem of the coexistence in poetry of the ethical and the aesthetic. The good and the beautiful could not only reside naturally together — at the highest levels of act and sentiment they were indistinguishable. But ordinarily Pindar neither sermonizes nor shrinks from differentiating good and evil, and his choice is never in doubt. «Pindar's art is thus an act of homage to values, and to human values in particular... It is the function of the poet, as the voice and conscience of the community, to make sure that the good is honoured, and with correct judgment to allot praise or blame to men and things. In the ode to Hora Pindar declares [Nem. VIII, 37-39]: 'Others strive for gold or for possession of land insatiably; but I make my ambition that I may be pleasing to my fellow-citizens until my body is robed in earth, praising what is praiseworthy, and strewing blame on the impious.'»[8]

Pindar was indeed the voice and conscience of the community, incessantly enlisted in behalf of what was noblest in Greek life, as a member of the aristocracy would conceive it. He appeals to the established opinion of the community when he writes: «There is a saying among men, that it is not meet that a deed nobly done should be buried silently in the ground, and a lay divine of verse [θεσπεσία ἀοιδά] is well fitted for loud acclaim.»[9] Great accomplishments have only one enduring reward: «For noble deeds, we can hold up a mirror, in one way only — if, by grace of Memory with the gleaming crown, one findeth a meed for toil in sounding streams of song.»[10]

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[8] Fränkel, pp. 489-490.

[9] Nem., IX, 6-7; cf. Nem., VII, 12-13; Ol., X, 91-93.

[10] Nem., VII, 14-16; cf. Nem., III, 29 and IV, 83-85.

The glorification of deeds nobly done constitutes the rich substance of Pindar's odes, but for their essence, their «finalité humaine», we must look beyond the deed itself, no matter how greathearted, to its inner meaning, and this only the word can give. «Longer than deeds liveth the word», Pindar says to the victor in an athletic contest, «whatsoever it be that the tongue, by the favour of the Graces, draweth forth from the depth of the mind» (Nem., IV, 6-8). «For whatsoever one hath well said goeth forth with an immortal voice; and thus, over the fruitful earth and athwart the sea hath passed the light of noble deeds unquenchable forever» (Isth., IV, 40-42).[11]

Memory, the mother of the Muses, and the Muses themselves, project a boundless future, just as they draw upon a limitless past. Immortality, a metaphor of consanguinity with the gods, is their seemingly insubstantial, but infinitely precious «merchandise», as Pinder would say (Pyth., II, 67), and Ronsard after him (I, 139). «Par la bouche du poète, elles préparent actuellement l'immortalité future de ceux qu'il chante. L'œuvre de Pindare est pleine de ce souci et de cette fierté de conférer l'immortalité: cela dépasse de beaucoup, chez lui, la simple préoccupation d'exécuter une ode triomphale. Au vrai... là est le centre de son œuvre, autour duquel tout s'organise.»[12]

A similar concern and pride characterize the encomiastic poetry of Ronsard, and a similar relationship to the inspiring divinities. «Cette incantation prend sa force des dieux. Elle peut créer des immortels parce qu'elle jaillit de l'ardeur apollinienne... Destiné à susciter des immortels, le langage du chantre pindarique ne pouvait avoir l'aimable simplicité de la Muse marotine... de même que la poésie est grâce au pouvoir du lyrisme une révélation du monde divin dans le quotidien, la gloire permet au mortel d'approcher des immortels.»[13]

The themes of glory and immortality in Ronsard's poetry, and the terms themselves, are often inseparable. Even when they are not mentioned together, they are, as in Pindar, reciprocally implied. He refers to the examples of the epic heroes of antiquity, immortalized in glory by Homer and Virgil, with whom he claims some affinity since he is caught up in a like enterprise:

> N'as tu oui parler d'Æenée,
> D'Achille, Ajax, Idomenée?
> A moi semblables artisans
> Ont immortalisé leur gloire,

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[11] Cf. Ol., XI, 4-6; Pyth., III, 114-115; Isth., VII, 16-19.

[12] Duchemin, p. 41, cf. p. 303; the final chapter of her book (pp. 297-334) is entitled «Le poète dispensateur d'immortalité». See also Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 36-38.

[13] Françoise Joukovsky, *La gloire dans la poésie française et néolatine du XVI^e siècle*, p. 207, in a section entitled «L'orgueil pindarique».

Dessus les piliers de memoire
Maugré la carriere des ans.
(I, 140-141; cf. I, 95)

The Muses, as the daughters of Memory, are «dispensatrices de connaissance»,[14] but it is as «ouvrières de véridique gloire et d'immortalité»[15] that they attain the height of their ideal function:

Debout Muses, qu'on m'attelle
Vostre charette[16] immortelle...
(I, 172; cf. I, 98)

For Ronsard, the central inadequacy of the «Muse marotine» in the *Epistre* addressed to François de Bourbon was its failure to assure the immortal glory of its *dédicataire*:

L'hinne que Marot te fit
Apres l'heur de ta victoire,
Prince vainqueur, ne sufit
Pour eternizer ta gloire.
(I, 82-83; cf. 87, vv. 65-68, 73-76)

But for Du Bellay, Ronsard's collaborator in promoting the Pindaric style in France, his admiration is ungrudging and his promises of glory more generous than for members of the royal family. He begins an ode to Joachim in a manner reminiscent of the opening of Pindar's fourth Pythian, by saying

Aujourdui[17] je me vanterai
Que jamais je ne chanterai
Un homme plus aimé que toi
Des neuf pucelles & de moi,
Poste[18] qui cornera ta gloire...
(I, 108-109)

Ronsard's admiration is reciprocated, for

Nul tant que lui n'est adorant
Les vers dont tu [Muse] vas honorant
La gloire de ceus que je sonne:

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[14] Duchemin, pp. 27, 28, describes the Muses as possessing and granting knowledge of the past; this formula occurs on p. 387 in the *Table des matières.*

[15] *Op. cit.*, p. 44. Cf. Croiset, p. 152: lyric poetry is «le principal dispensateur de la gloire légitime». See also *POR*, p. 130, *The Muse glorifies noble deeds.*

[16] Ronsard found this image in Ol., IX, 81, ἐν Μοισᾶν δίφρῳ, «in the Muses' car». Slater defines δίφρος in this context as «the chariot of song». Cf. below, Chap. XVIII, n. 60.

[17] The fourth Pythian begins with Σάμερον, «today», invokes the Muse, and refers to Arcesilas as a friend. But this passage of the ode to Du Bellay ssems also to be substantially indebted to Ol., I, 103-105.

[18] «Messager, héraut. Cf. Pindare, *Ném.* IV, 74.» Note by Laumonier.

Il s'égaie de tes chansons,
Et de ces nouvelles façons,
Auparavant non imitables[19]...
(I, 109-110; cf. 116, vv. 141-142)

He tells the Angevin poet, anticipating the message of his ode *A sa Muse* (II, 152-153), that neither the years, nor stormy winds, nor the bite of eroding rain,[20]

Ne donne aus vers doctes la mort:
Par eus la Parque est devancée,
Ils ardent l'eternelle nuit...
(I, 112)

In the dedicatory poem of his first book of odes Ronsard wishes to appear in the eyes of Henri II as «Le saint Harpeur de ta gloire» (I, 62); and in the *Ode de la Paix* he warns the king that if the Muse has denied her hymns,

Nul jamais ne s'est vanté
D'avoir consacré sa gloire...
(III, 29)

The Pindaric ode to Catherine de Médicis is blunt in its assertion of Ronsard's superiority to his rivals in glorifying the objects of his eulogies:

Un tas qui chantent de toi,
Ne sçavent si bien que moi
Comme l'on sonne la gloire.
(I, 70)

Similar messages are addressed to the king's sister (I, 174), to the Cardinal de Lorraine (I, 79, 82), to Montmorency (III, 27).

In the great ode to l'Hospital, composed «Pour orner le hault de la gloire» of its *dédicataire* (I, 119), the concepts of praise and glory attain the plenitude of their ordained value as Jupiter urges the Muses to bear their gift of inspiration to the poets of the world:

Sus doncque retournez au monde...
Et là, d'une langue faconde
Chantez ma gloire, & vostre loz...
(III, 141)

That is for Ronsard, instructed by the preludes of the first Pythian and of Hesiod's *Theogony*,[21] the true function of the Muses — to awaken magnifi-

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[19] Probably a reference to Horace's assertion of Pindar's inimitable qualities, *Odes*, IV, ii, 14.

[20] Cf. above, Chap. XVI, n. 17.

[21] *Paideia*, I, 75, «It was the spirit in its original sense — *spiritus*, the breath of God — which the poet [Hesiod] felt when the Muses inspired him at the foot of Helicon». Cf. Duche-

cats in the hearts and on the tongues of men; not simply their function, but their essence, for as the god's exhortation to his daughters draws to a close in the ode to l'Hospital, they are made one with the glory and the praise of Jupiter:

> Allez ma gloire la meilleure,
> Allez mon loz le plus fameux.
> (III, 146)

In his understanding of the nature of the Muses, Ronsard rose to this plane of ideal abstraction inspired by the «suprême acte de foi dans la valeur du pindarisme»[22] which the ode to l'Hospital represented for him. But the theory of lyric praise that he had composed for the preface of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* was of a less elevated nature, dictated by the practical necessities, as Ronsard then saw them, of a young poet seeking to establish his reputation at the Court of France.

He was aware that on occasion Pindar was no more reticent about the merits of his poems than he was about the achievements of those for whom his odes were composed. He was also familiar, no doubt, with these verses (323-324) of Horace's *Ars Poetica*:

> Grais ingenium, Grais dedit ore rotundo
> Musa loqui, praeter laudem nullius avaris.

But it may have been directly from the odes of Pindar that Ronsard drew the elements of a theory of lyric praise which it would never have occurred to the Theban poet to formulate in explicit terms:

«Certes je m'assure que tels debonnaires lecteurs ne me blâmeront, moi de me louer quelque fois modestement, ni aussi de trop hautement celebrer les honneurs des hommes, favorisés par mes vers: car outre que ma boutique[23] n'est chargée d'autres drogues que de louanges, & d'honneurs, c'est le vrai but d'un poëte Liriq de celebrer jusques à l'extremité celui qu'il entreprend de louer. Et s'il ne connoist en lui chose qui soit dinne de grande recommandation, il doit entrer dans sa race, & là chercher quelqu'un de ses aieus, jadis braves, & vaillans: ou l'honnorer par le titre de son païs, ou de quelque heureuse fortune survenue soit à lui, soit aus siens, ou par autres vagabondes digressions, industrieusement brouillant ores ceci, ores cela,

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min, p. 23, «Ainsi Zeus paraît être, dans une conception commune aux deux poètes [Hesiod and Pindar], le principe premier de la création poétique».

[22] *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 364.

[23] The image of the *boutique* and its contents, derived from Pyth., II, 67, is developed in the ode *A Bertran Berger de Poitiers*, I, 138-139.

& par l'un louant l'autre, tellement que tous deus se sentent d'une méme louange» (I, 48).[24]

These lines constitute a general theory of lyric praise within which it is easier for the reader to discern a number of divisions — the poet's self-praise, his eulogy of the individual to whom an ode is addressed, praise of his family, his ancestors, and native city or region — than it was for Ronsard, or Pindar for that matter, to maintain such artificial separations in their poems, something that neither would have dreamt of doing. Had Ronsard never defined the general theory in the preface, it would still have been discoverable in dispersion among his odes, as he himself had found it disseminated among the odes of Pindar.

The thought upon which the ninth Nemean opens, that it is the poet's obligation to prevent noble deeds from being entombed in silence, reappears in Ronsard's ode to François de Bourbon:

> Jamais la Muse ne soufre
> Qu'un silence soumeillant
> En ses tenebres engoufre
> Les faits d'un homme vaillant.
> (I, 87)

To a contestant who had been victorious in the boxing-match Pindar wrote: «For one who is dying, it is a hateful sight to see his wealth falling to the lot of a master who is a stranger from another home; even so, Hagesidamus, whensoever a man, who hath done noble deeds, descendeth to the abode of Hades, without the meed of song, he hath spent his strength and his breath in vain, and winneth but little pleasure by his toil; whereas thou hast glory shed upon thee by the soft-toned lyre and by the sweet flute, and thy fame waxeth widely by favour of the Pierid daughters of Zeus» (Ol., X, 88-96). Ronsard thought this passage could suitably be adapted for his ode to François de Carnavalet, first Equerry of the Royal Stable and trainer of French youth in horsemanship:

> Le mourant n'a tant d'ennui
> Lachant sa richesse exquise
> Aus etrangers, qui de lui
> Raviront la chose aquise,

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[24] See James Hutton, «Rhetorical Doctrine and Some Poems of Ronsard», in *The Rhetorical Idiom: Essays in Rhetoric, Oratory, Language, and Drama presented to Herbert August Wichelns...*, edited by Donald C. Bryant (Ithaca, N.Y., 1958), p. 318: «This naïve and cynical confession, which must have made the recipients of Ronsard's odes look twice at the poems in their honor, smells strongly of the rhetoric books and is indeed founded on the topics recommended for encomia... But the context suggests that, though lapsing into rhetorical terminology, Ronsard's thought remains in the sphere of Imitation and that he may have believed that these shifts represented the practice of his model, Pindar.»

Comme celui qui devale
Dedans la barque infernale
De mes hinnes devétu:
En vain l'on travaille au monde
Si la lirique faconde
Fait muéte la vertu.

EPODE [3]

Mais la mienne emmiellée
Qui sçait les lois de mon doi,
Aveq, les flutes meslée
Chassera l'oubli de toi.
Les neuf divines Pucelles
Gardent la gloire chez elles,
Et mon luc qu'els ont fait estre
De leurs secrés le grand prestre,
Bruiant un chant solennel,
Epandra de sus ta face
Le dous sucre de sa grace,
Dont le gout semble eternel.

(I, 98; cf. 126, vv. 1-11)

II. The Poet's Self-Praise

Referring to the personal situation of the lyric poet in Hellenic society, Croiset says (pp. 274-275): «Son rôle était honorable et honoré, et lui-même en avait conscience... Il a autant que personne le sentiment de l'importance et de la dignité de son art. Il n'a pas moins conscience de son propre génie. En cela, du reste, il est fidèle à l'usage... des poètes lyriques grecs... Il était naturel que le lyrisme fût prodigue d'assurances de ce genre. Comme les poètes lyriques louaient toujours quelque chose ou quelqu'un, promettre à leurs propres chants l'immortalité, c'était la promettre aussi à leurs éloges, et par conséquent à la gloire de ceux mêmes qu'ils célébraient... Comme en outre beaucoup de poèmes lyriques étaient composés pour des concours, il était également inévitable que chaque concurrent, dans l'enthousiasme de la lutte, cherchât à se faire valoir, ou même défiât ses adversaires. La bonne opinion de soi-même, la conscience hautement avouée de sa propre force devait donc être dans les habitudes du lyrisme, et il n'y a pas lieu de signaler ce sentiment chez Pindar comme un trait de caractère. Ce qu'on peut dire de lui pourtant, c'est qu'il paraît l'avoir porté aussi loin que personne, et qu'il l'a exprimé avec une fierté de ton et d'accent qui est bien conforme à la hauteur ordinaire de son inspiration.» Several examples from among many given by Croiset illustrate these observations.

In the fourth Nemean (81) Pindar compares his ode to a memorial monument «whiter than the Parian stone», though in the fifth (1-3) he denies any similarity between the immobility of sculpture and his poetic art which reaches all the corners of the Hellenic world, «in every argosy, and in every

skiff» (cf. Ol., IX, 23-25). He concludes the first Olympian to Hieron in 476 with a prayer (115-116) for the well-being of the ruler of Syracuse and for his own pre-eminence «in the lore of song among Hellenes in every land». For the same monarch, then suffering from poor health, Pindar wrote the third Pythian (474?), an ode of consolation rather than of triumph, which «shows his sympathy for Hieron without abating his own independence or dignity», and expresses a «ringing hope that through him Hieron will have a fame like the heroes of old» (112-114). In the final verses (114-115) the poet «reveals himself in all his pride in his art and leaves no doubt that in his own way he is as great a man as Hieron».[25]

On occasion Pindar does not so much assert his pre-eminence, as utter a hope or prayer that he may be able to surpass his rivals in poetry (Pyth., I, 45; Nem., IX, 54-55). The prayer is sometimes replaced with words of authentic confidence in a superiority granted to him by destiny. In metaphors that the scholiasts had found as difficult to decipher as modern critics, he imagines himself struggling in deep waters against the envious yet ineffectual designs of his rivals, but, he says, «whatsoever excellence Lord Destiny assigned me, well I know that the lapse of time will bring it to its appointed perfection» (Nem., IV, 36-43; cf. Ol., IX, 26-27). We have more than once encountered the proud verses in which Pindar (Ol., II, 86-88; Nem., III, 80-82), and Ronsard (I, 111), reduce their competitors in poetry to the lowly level of crows or jackdaws, vainly striving to imitate inspired human speech, while claiming for themselves the status of the eagle, the divine bird of Zeus, companion of the inspiring Sky-god. For as Pindar «sees a divine hand in triumphs, so he feels it in poetry».[26] His «sublime candor» is dictated not by the need to magnify his poetic powers, but by the deep intuition «that to exalt his own gift is to honor the divinity who bestows it».[27]

When Ronsard wrote in the preface to the *Odes*, «... c'est le vrai but d'un poëte Liriq de celebrer jusques à l'extremité celui qu'il entreprend de louer» (I, 48), he was adopting quite consciously what Croiset has called «l'usage... des poètes lyriques grecs», and was fully aware that in accordance with this usage a certain amount of self-praise was admissible. Thus he writes in the same preface «Donques desirant par elle [l'estude des bonnes lettres] m'approprier quelque louange... j'allai voir les étrangers» (I, 44). The last phrase signifies, according to Laumonier's note, «Je me mis à étudier les poètes Grecs, Latins et Italiens», an explanation confirmed by Ronsard

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[25] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 350.

[26] Finley, p. 65.

[27] R.C. Jebb, *The Growth and Influence of Classical Greek Poetry* (Boston and New York, 1894), p. 143.

somewhat later in the preface, «Il ne faut aussi que le volage lecteur me blâme de trop me louer... aiant pour ma deffence l'exemple de tous les Poëtes Grecs & Latins» (I, 47). It would have been natural for Jean Dorat to have mentioned this usage in his lecture on Pindar, just as it was natural for Marc-Antoine de Muret, in his defense of Ronsard in the preface to the *Commentary* of the *Amours* of 1553, to write (f. iiii r°-v°): «L'un le reprenoit de se trop loüer, l'autre d'ecrire trop oscurement... ne sachans pas, que cette coutume de se loüer lui est commune avecques tous les plus excellans poëtes qui jamais furent...»

In 1553 Muret may have known directly from Ronsard himself that the foremost adversary of the poet of Vendôme was Mellin de Saint-Gelais, who, in any event, was singled out by name as a *médisant* of Ronsard in v. 144 of the ode *A Madame Marguerite*. This was written in 1550 and published in 1552; in it Mellin was described as

> Se travaillant de faire croire
> Au Roy ton frere, que la gloire
> Me trahissoit villainement,
> Et que par les vers de mon œuvre,
> Aultre chose ne se decoœuvre
> Que mes louenges seulement.
> (III, 106)

Ronsard anticipates what Muret will soon write:

> L'un crie que trop je me vante,[28]
> L'autre que le vers que je chante
> N'est point bien joinct ne maçonné...

He replies to this accusation in much more specific terms than his commentator will employ, revealing full cognizance of the antiquity of the custom of self-praise among poets, especially Pindar:

> Mais je respon tout au contraire,
> Comme l'ayant bien sceu portraire
> Dessus le moulle des plus vieux,
> Et comme cil qui ne s'egare
> Des vers repliez de Pindare,
> Incongneuz de mes envieux.
> (III, 107)

In his expressions of self-praise, he says (vv. 247-252), that he does no more than follow the incomparable Pindar, and he prays for the power of the Theban's lofty verse in words of ostensibly humble self-effacement which, in reality, are intended to express his ardent wish to retaliate against his detractors:

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[28] Having in mind, for example, the haughty passage in the Pindaric ode to Du Bellay in which Ronsard asserts his superiority to Horace, I, 118, vv. 165-176.

Que pleust à Dieu qu'à sa haultesse
Fust egale ma petitesse,[29]
Et mes vers à ses chants nerveux,
Par ta saincte grandeur je jure,
Que je corneroy ceste injure[30]
Aux oreilles de noz Nepveux.[31]
(III, 113)

Such moments of humility, if that is indeed what they were, occurred rarely in these early years. In an ode *A son livre* he says that though Homer is first in glory,

Une muette fumiere
N'obscurcist Thebe pourtant...

and that his own poems are destined to live «superieurs Du tens» (II, 32).

Pindar had forgotten his promise of an ode to Hagesidamus and redeems his word with interest [τόκος] by composing for him the tenth and eleventh Olympians. Ronsard adopts the same procedure in *Au seigneur de Carnavalet*:

Ma promesse ne veut pas
Que ton nom tumbe là bas
Orphelin du vrai honneur,
Ne sans avoir connoissance
Combien Ronsard a puissance,
Et dequoi il est donneur.
(I, 90)

In a brief second ode to Carnavalet, *Usure à luimesme*, he pays the interest that his debt had incurred with a eulogy of... Ronsard!

Ne pilier, ne terme dorique
D'histoires vieilles decoré,
Ne marbre tiré de l'Afrique
En colonnes elabouré,
Ne fer animé sur l'enclume
Ne feront vivre ton renom,
Comme la poincte de ma plume
Pourra perpetuer ton nom.[32]
(I, 99)

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[29] Cf. a similar statement antedating the Pindaric period, I, 266.

[30] «L'injure que lui fit Mellin de Saint-Gelais en raillant ses odes pindariques devant Henri II.» Note by Laumonier.

[31] Posterity.

[32] For other examples, some deriving from Horace, see I, 166; II, 82, 99-100, 152-153.

Werner Jaeger, writing on the power of the epic style to exalt and ennoble almost everything it touches, traces this tendency to «the original spirit of the old κλέα ἀνδρῶν,» brief narratives in hexameters of the lives and adventures of celebrated heroes which preceded the formation of the Homeric epics.[33] Jaeger quotes Dio of Prusa who said, «Homer praised almost everything... He passed over nothing without somehow honouring and glorifying it. Thersites, he called *a clear-voiced speaker*» (emphasis in text). «Everything low, contemptible, and ugly», Jaeger adds, «is banished from the world of the epic.»[34]

Pindar was one of the inheritors of this ancient tradition, and maintained it even if it meant rejecting or transforming certain details of legends about the heroes and the gods that were intolerably offensive to the poet's sense of reverence. Thus he repudiates the myth that Tantalus killed his son Pelops and served his flesh to the gods. «Far be it from me», Pindar cries, «to call any one of the blessed gods a cannibal! I stand aloof» (Ol., I, 52). Similarly, on the fate that befell Bellerophon, who had attempted to mount to heaven on the winged Pegasus and was thrown from the utmost height for his impiety, Pindar is equally reticent: «I shall pass in silence over his doom» (Ol., XIII, 91).[35] As Norwood wrote (pp. 52-53), «Pindar's imagination was fired by the divine or heroic figures that blazed in the verse of Homer, Hesiod, and Stesichorus; and he alters legend for the sake of τὸ καλόν, the noble and lovely, to keep the adored radiance undimmed.» But the legends that required alteration were the rare exception. «The vast treasure of heroic paradeigmata»[36] provided Pindar with many examples of noble actions like that of Antilochus, who gave his life for his father Nestor's sake (Pyth., VI, 28-42), or that of Polydeuces, who begged his father Zeus to let him die with Castor, his brother, rather than to be «wholly a god and dwelling in heaven» (Nem., X, 55-79).

The passionate pursuit of glory characterized all of Hellenic antiquity, but nowhere was it more intense than in the sphere of Greek life whose center

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[33] *Paideia*, I, 41-42; see also A. Severyns, *Homère l'artiste* (Brussels, 1948), p. 46.

[34] *Paideia*, I, 42.

[35] In Ol., XIII Pindar was writing for a Corinthian patron and audience, and his reticence about the tragic end of Bellerophon, a legendary hero of Corinth, was understandable. He was less reticent when writing about the same legend for Thebans in the seventh Isthmian, 44-47. See also Ol., IX, 35-39, for Pindar's refusal to speak evil of the gods.

[36] *Paideia*, I, 217.

was Olympia.[37] When Epharmostus won the wrestling-match at Olympia in 468 B.C., Pindar wrote in the ninth Olympian (93-94): «Amid what loud applause did he pass round the ring, a victor in life's prime, nobly fair, and one who had wrought most noble deeds!» For Timasarchus, another victorious wrestler, he wrote, «Songs, that are the wise daughters of the Muses, are wont to soothe the victor by their touch. Nor doth warm water soothe the limbs so gently as praise that is linked with the lyre» (Nem., IV, 2-5). The remembrance of these verses and of the arduous days and nights that Ronsard and his colleages devoted to the acquisition of Greek language and letters, led the poet to think of Dorat's teaching under the metaphor of an agon. In the Pindaric ode to his master in Hellenic studies he wrote:

> Le bain ne soulage pas
> Si bien les cors qui sont las
> Comme la louange douce
> Nous soulage, que du pouce
> A la lire nous joignons...
> (I, 126; cf. I, 135-138)

The opposite side of this medal of praise and glory was the poet's anxiety to avoid fault-finding or blame. The Aeginetans had criticized Pindar for having referred in a disparaging manner in his sixth paean to Neoptolemus, one of their local heroes.[38] The poet, who for once appears to have been inadvertently tactless, does his best in the seventh Nemean (34-49), to make amends by softening his allusions to Neoptolemus. He refutes the accusation of having slandered the hero (61-63): «Guest-friend am I; averting the dark shadow of blame, and bringing true glory, like streams of water, to the hero that I love, I shall sing his praise...»

How, Croiset asks (p. 279), does Pindar conciliate his obligations as a poet of praise with his love of the truth, two principles which seem to collide in the seventh Nemean? Croiset answers: «Ce ne peut être qu'à force de tact, de prudence, de ménagements... Il faut que la vérité pénètre sans déchirer... Bref il y a vingt manières d'avertir sans blesser et d'instruire sans inconvenance; la seule règle qui ne souffre aucune exception, c'est la nécessité de la mesure et du tact, sans lesquels le rôle du poète lyrique serait impossible à remplir.»

Pindar «averts the dark shadow of blame... and brings true glory to the hero that he loves» («j'apporterai à un ami... la louange véridique de sa gloire», tr. Puech). Was this the source of the prelude of Ronsard's ode *A*

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[37] Croiset, p. 223.

[38] See Puech, III, 85-87, for details of the incident.

Anthoine de Baïf, that curious eulogy, encomiastic more in intention than in fulfillment. An atmosphere is created in the first few lines which the remainder of the composition, in spite of its not ungenerous meed of praise, does not succeed in dispelling:

> J'ai tousjours celé les fautes
> Dont mes amis sont tachés,
> J'ai tousjours teu leurs pechés,
> Mais non pas leurs vertus hautes:
> Car moi qui suis le sonneur
> Et le courier des louanges,
> Je ne porte aus gens étranges
> Sinon la gloire & l'honneur...
> (I, 128-129)

There are other similarities between the seventh Nemean and Ronsard's Pindaric ode to Baïf which support this hypothesis.[39] What is beyond question is Ronsard's adoption, in his version of the myth of Bellerophon, of Pindar's refusal to retain in his narrative details that would darken the glory of the hero. «I shall pass in silence over his doom», Pindar had said, and Ronsard:

> Mais quel mechef le tua
> Je le passe sous silence...
> (I, 95)

But it is unimaginable that Ronsard's «silence» was motivated by the same considerations of piety that compelled Pindar's reticence, for it was broken immediately in the following lines (see *RPL*, p. 315, n. 1). These two verses were transposed from the thirteenth Olympian to the ode for Carnavalet, as indeed the myth of Bellerophon in its entirety was inserted there (I, 93-95), for the sole reason that its equestrian subject seemed to Ronsard particularly appropriate for an ode to the Royal Equerry.

In his Pindaric odes, and in many others influenced by the poet of Thebes, Ronsard undertook to honor the victors in every type of contest or activity — military, diplomatic, social, cultural, poetic — since he was precluded by the nonexistence of the Great Games from imitating, even approximately, the precise subject matter of «Pindare [qui] faisoit chanter les hinnes écris à la louange des vainqueurs Olympiens, Pithiens, Nemeans, Isthmiens» (I, 46).[40]

We need perhaps not insist anew on Ronsard's Pindaric odes cele-

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[39] Cf. Nem., VII, 5-6 with vv. 16-20 of Ronsard's ode; Nem., VII, 54-55 with vv. 31-34.

[40] Cf. *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 346-347.

brating the military victory of François de Bourbon or the victory in judicial combat of Gui de Chabot.[41]

One of the lesser diplomatic figures in the reigns of François Ier and Henri II, the poet Lancelot Carle, Bishop of Riez, had performed a great service for Ronsard. «Le jour des Rois [le 6 janvier] 1554, il lut devant la cour un 'dessein', c'est-à-dire un plan détaillé de la *Franciade* telle que la projetait Ronsard, lequel l'en remercia en lui dédiant l'année suivante son *Hymne des Daimons*.»[42] The poem refers to Carle's diplomatic missions to England and Italy (vv. 23-26), but the victory celebrated in the prelude is that of Ronsard, whose *Franciade*, thanks to the Bishop's intervention, had finally obtained a hearing at Court.

Les Daimons, published late in 1555 among *Les Hymnes*, begins with an expression of Ronsard's profound remorse for having allowed so long a time to elapse between Carle's friendly act and his acknowledgement of it:

> Quand de jour et de nuict je repense à par moy
> Les honenstes faveurs que j'ay reçeu de toy,
> CARLE, docte Prelat, & qu'encore ma Muse
> Ne t'a remercié, coulpable je m'accuse
> De quoy si longuement sous silence j'ay teu
> L'obligation deüe à ta rare Vertu:
> Je me hay, si despit, que je ne fais plus conte
> De mes vers, ny de moy, & si n'ose, de honte,
> Lever les yeux en haut, de peur que tous les Dieux,
> La Lune, le Soleil, les Astres, & les Cieux
> Ne m'appellent ingrat, & ne frappent ma teste,
> Pour mon peché commis, d'une juste tempeste...
> (VIII, 115-116)

It is not the first time that Ronsard has employed this manner of introducing a poem. We have just seen it in the prelude of the ode to Carnavalet, where the poet regrets his failure to write a promised composition in his honor. In the case of Carle there had, of course, been no promise — only a deep sense of obligation comparable to that of Pindar in the prelude of the tenth Olympian for Hagesidamus: «Read me the name of the Olympian victor, the son of Archestratus! Tell me where it is written in my heart! For I have forgotten that I owed him a sweet song; but do thou, O Muse, and also Truth, the daughter of Zeus, with a hand that setteth all things right, put an end to the blame for a broken promise, the blame for wronging a friend. Lo, the lingering hours have come from afar, and have made me ashamed of my deep debt» (1-8).

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[41] For the first see Chap. XI, sec. ix; for the second, the present chapter, sec. i; for both, *POR.*, pp. 95-97.

[42] Henri Chamard in *DLF*: SS, p. 157, col. 2.

This overture invokes the Muse and Alatheia, Goddess of Truth, both daughters of Zeus; the prelude of the second Nemean recalls that the Homeridae invoked the God of the sky himself in the opening verses of their songs: «Even as the sons of Homer, those singers of deftly woven lays, begin most often with Zeus for their prelude [ἄρχονται, Διὸς ἐκ προοιμίου]; even so hath our hero laid a first foundation for a tale of achievements in the sacred games by receiving a crown in the storied grove of Nemean Zeus» (1-5). Alcman, the lyric poet who had preceded Pindar by almost a century and a half, followed this tradition of the Homeridae. A fragment of his reads: «Of this song of mine the beginning shall be Zeus [ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχομένα].»[43] Pindar alludes with reverence to the tradition. For him the Games were sacred because they were «held in honor of the gods, the Olympian and Nemean of Zeus, the Pythian of Apollo, the Isthmian of Poseidon»,[44] and because the gods were felt as an auspicious immanent presence in every activity associated with the Games. The Muses themselves, Pindar tells us, begin their songs «after a prelude to Zeus» [Διὸς ἀρχόμεναι] (Nem., V, 25).

When Pindar set down the overture of the second Olympian for Theron, he did not use the traditional preludial language of the Homeridae, of Alcman, or his own in the fifth Nemean, but the thought was identical: «Ye hymns that rule the lyre! what god, what hero, aye, and what man shall we loudly praise? Verily Zeus is the lord of Pisa; and Heracles established the Olympic festival... while Theron must be proclaimed by reason of his victorious chariot» (1-6).

Ronsard utilized this Pindaric proem, mingled sometimes with a Theocritean reminiscence, on more than one occasion. In the *Hymne de... Charles Cardinal de Lorraine* (1559), perfectly aware that he is implicitly equating the Catholic prelate with Zeus, he writes a eulogy of Charles' diplomatic achievements. The poetic movement of interrogation, and the inclusion of a reference to Hercules, though necessarily different from that of Pindar, leave very little doubt that the second Olympian inspired these verses:

> Quel vers ira premier anoncer ta louange
> Heraut de tes vertus parmi le peuple estrange?
> Quel sera le dernier? Comme Hercule le grand
> Soustint de ses grands bras tout ce monde qui pend...
> En ce point[45] tu soutins presque dés ton enfance,
> Non des bras mais d'esprit, les affaires de France...
> (IX, 35-37)

That Ronsard was cognizant of the implicit assimilation of the Cardinal

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[43] *Lyra Graeca*, I, 65.

[44] Gildersleeve, p. xxiii.

[45] «De la même façon qu'Hercule.» Note by Laumonier.

and Zeus is evident from the fact that more than a decade earlier, in the Pindaric ode *Au Roi* which opens the *Premier livre des Odes*, he had made the same assimilation explicitly between Henri II and Jupiter:

> De Jupiter les antiques
> Leurs ecris embellissoient,
> Par lui leurs chants poëtiques
> Commençoient, & finissoient,
> Prenant plaisir d'ouir dire
> Ses louanges à la lire:
> Mais HENRI sera le Dieu
> Qui commencera mon mettre,
> Et que j'ai voué de mettre
> A la fin & au meilieu.
>
> (I, 63; cf. I, 92; III, 103)

But as Laumonier correctly points out (I, 63, n. 4), the final quatrain (he might just as correctly have said most of the second strophe) is taken from the prelude of Idyll XVII of Theocritus: «With Zeus let us begin, Muses, and with Zeus I pray you end when the greatest of Gods is shown honour in our song: but for men first, midst and last be the name of Ptolemy; for he is of men the chiefest» (1-4).[46]

For poet-humanists as deeply committed as Ronsard and his colleagues were to the classical, especially Hellenic, reorientation of French literature, and who encountered the bitter opposition of the Court poets, it was most natural to conceive of the struggle in which they were engaged as a contest fully comparable, on the cultural rather than the athletic level, to those of the Great Games, a struggle on which their personal destinies and the destiny of French letters depended. Not fewer than three of Ronsard's Pindaric odes, including the one to Michel de l'Hospital, as well as a number of the non-triadic poems, were devoted to various phases of this contention, most of them victory odes, epinicians, in the broadest sense of the term.

The strife between the old and the new schools of poetry is mentioned in the opening verses of Ronsard's Pindaric ode *A Bouju Angevin*, composed in August or September 1549[47]:

> Le potier hait le potier,
> Le feuvre, le charpentier,
> Le Poëte tout ainsi
> Hait celui qui l'est aussi...
>
> (I, 121)

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[46] J.M. Edmonds, ed. and tr., *The Greek Bucolic Poets*, (London, New York, 1928), p. 211.

[47] *RPL*, pp. 63 and 65.

Jacques Bouju, himself a poet, was one of the earliest defenders of the new style. «Il est à croire que Bouju lisait à la princesse [Marguerite] et à la reine non seulement les œuvres déjà imprimées de Du Bellay et de Ronsard, mais encore quelques-unes de leurs pièces manuscrites.»[48] Ronsard conceived of the favorable intervention of Bouju as an incident of the highest importance in the war against the obscurantism of the Court poets:

Quand Phebus paroist aus cieus
Les ombres fuient ses yeus:
Ainsi où ta muse luit
La sourde ignorance fuit,
Rendant les bouches muétes
De nos malheureus poëtes
Qui souloient comme pourceaus
Souiller le clair des russeaus:
Car les vers que j'ai veu naistre
Si heureusement de toi,
Te rendent digne pour estre
Prisé de la seur d'un Roi.

The final verses allude to the fact that the ode here dedicated to Bouju is in the new Pindaric mode that he had defended before the most influential persons of Henri II's entourage:

Puis les Dieus conte ne font
De nul papier, s'il ne porte
A la Dorienne sorte
Ton beau nom de sus le front.
(I, 124-125)

Not content with dedicating a triumphal Pindaric ode to Jacques Bouju, Ronsard also addressed to him at about the same time a non-triadic ode of largely Horatian inspiration, as the victor over the monstrous ignorance which had hindered the rise of the new poetry:

Cetui-ci en vers les gloires
Des Dieus vainqueurs écrira,
Et cetui-là les victoires
De nos vieus princes dira.

Mais moi je veil que ma Muse
Répande ton nom par l'air,
Et que toute s'i amuse
Si peu qu'elle sçait parler:

Pour estre de nostre France
L'un de ceus qui ont défait
Le villain monstre Ignorance
Et le siecle d'or refait.
(II, 87-88)

[48] *RPL*, p. 65, n. 4.

The Pindaric ode *A Madame Marguerite* is to a large extent a texture of borrowings from many of the triumphal songs of the Theban poet. In the second strophe Ronsard imagines a contemporary parallel to the birth of Pallas Athena from the head of Zeus: Pallas, wielding her lance rather than an axe, replaces Hephaestus in the role of celestial midwife, François Ier assumes that of the supreme god of the pantheon, and Marguerite-Athena is born:

> Par un miracle nouveau
> Pallas du bout de sa lance
> Ouvrit un peu le cerveau
> De François seigneur de France.
> Adonques Vierge nouvelle
> Tu sortis de sa cervelle,[49]
> Et les Muses qui te prindrent
> En leurs sçiences t'apprindrent:
> Mais quand le tens eut parfait
> L'acroissance de ton age,
> Tu pensas en ton courage,
> De mettre à chef un grand fait.
> (I, 74-75)

The «grand fait» was, of course, the annihilation of the Monster:

> Tes mains s'armerent alors
> De l'horreur de deus grands haches:
> Tes braz, tes flancs, & ton cors,
> Sous un double fer tu caches:
> Une menassante creste
> Branloit au hault de ta teste
> Joant sur la face horrible
> D'une Meduse terrible:
> Ainsi tu alas trouver
> Le vilain monstre Ignorance,
> Qui souloit toute la France
> Desous son ventre couver.
> (I, 75)

After her victory the new Pallas gives voice to the humanist doctrines in whose defense she had fought, while her poet intones the hymn of triumph:

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[49] If, as Laumonier suggests (I, 75, n. 1), «Ronsard a pu s'inspirer de Pindare, *Olymp.*, VII, 35 et suiv.», the effect on him in this instance was exceedingly weak. Pindar had written: «By the cunning craft of Hephaestus, at the stroke of the brazen hatchet, Athene leapt forth upon the crest of her father's head, and cried aloud with a mighty shout [ἀνορούσαισ' ἀλάλαξεν ὑπερμάχει βοᾷ], while Heaven and Mother Earth trembled before her.» Ronsard knew the seventh Olympian well, but it is certain that he saw little worth emulating in one of the most tremendous passages in Pindar. He was more successful (III, 135, vv. 281-284), in imitating a comparable passage in Hesiod's *Theogony*, 678-686, which describes the Titanomachy and makes no reference to Athena.

Puis versant de ta poitrine
Mainte source de doctrine,
Au vrai tu nous fais connoistre
Le miracle de ton estre.
Pour cela je chanterai
Ce bel hinne de victoire,[50]
Et de France à la Gent noire
L'enseigne j'en planterai.
(I, 76-77)

In 1552, on a vastly amplified scale, he published a non-triadic poem, also entitled *A Madame Marguerite*, in which he sought to impress her and his contemporaries with the solidity of his information concerning the athletic contests that took place during the Great Games (vv. 181-216).[51] Several additional stanzas were devoted to an account of the manner in which arose the celebration in song, accompanied by musical instruments, of the victors:

Ceulx-ci, de ceste feuille heureuse
Laçoyent leur perruque poudreuse,
Et craignantz perdre les labeurs
Pour qui leurs vertuz travaillerent,
Avec leur victoire eveillerent
Le mestier des premiers harpeurs.

Lesquelz, au soir par l'assemblée,
Quant l'œil de la lune doublée
Ardoit le voile obscur des cieux,
Avec les flustes doulxsonnantes,
Et les trompettes hault parlantes
Louengeoyent les victorieux.

Archilocq premier osa dire,
Suyvant le refrain de sa lyre
Les honneurs d'Hercule, en ses vers,
Qui depuis comme à luy servirent
A tous les vainqueurs, qui ravirent
L'olive par combatz divers.
(III, 110)

This brief historical sketch leads up to the tumultuous irruption of Pindar on the Greek literary scene as the supreme encomiast who had no qualms about mingling his own praises with those of the victors in the Games:

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[50] «Traduit du mot καλλίνικος (Pindare, *Olymp.*, IX, 2; *Ném.*, IV, 16).» Note by Laumonier. — The expression occurs also in the ode to Michel de l'Hospital, III, 137, v. 318, and long after Ronsard had «repudiated» Pindar, in XV, 66, v. 99 and XVI, 171, v. 1481. The equivalent form, *hymne triomphal*, occurs in VIII, 76, v. 70, and in III, 54, the title *Hymne triomphal sur le trepas de Marguerite de Valois.*

[51] Ronsard refers frequently to the athletic festivals of Greece or to imaginary ones established in imitation of them: II, 5; III, 55; V, 190, 251, VII, 231; VIII, 72-73, 311-312, etc. In the *Responce aux injures*, XI, 117, Ronsard describes himself as a «Laborieux athlete, & poudreux d'exercice». The description is developed on the following page.

Apres comme une eau debridée,
Ou comme la fouldre guindée
Sur la nue au moys le plus chault,
S'ouyt tonner la voix Dircée
Qui par l'air s'est si bien dressée,
Que nulle n'a bondi plus hault.

Elle, par les terres estranges,
Cria des vainqueurs les louanges,
Et plustost les fut elevant
Que l'air n'est froissé par la vire,
Ou l'eau ronflante du navire
Soufleté des gorges du vent.

Aussi nul chant ne s'accompare
Au chant lyrique de Pindare,
Que la honte ne coloroit
D'entremesler ses propres gloires
Avec les fameuses victoires
Des bataillants qu'il honoroit.
(III, 111)

This poem to Princess Marguerite, Duchesse de Berry, was probably written in the summer of 1550, though published in 1552 in the *Amours... Ensemble le cinquiesme des Odes*. It was an expression of gratitude for Marguerite's defense of his poetry at the Court of her brother Henri II in May or June 1550 (III, 118, n. 1). During the same summer, and for the same reason, the poet composed the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital, Chancelier de Madame Marguerite*, likewise published in 1552 among the odes that followed the *Amours*. Marguerite had appointed the enlightened humanist as her Chancellor in April 1550, shortly before the attack on Ronsard's poetry, and it was the combined effort of the Princess and her Chancellor that had saved the poet from the malicious assault of the Court poets.

Thus, when Ronsard writes in the first strophe of the ode to l'Hospital:

Sus les bords Dirceans j'amasse
Le tesor des plus riches fleurs,
Affin qu'en pillant je façonne
D'une laborieuse main,
La rondeur de ceste couronne
Trois fois torce d'un ply Thebain:
Pour orner le hault de la gloire
Du plus heureux Mignon des Dieux,
Qui çà bas r'amena des Cieux
Les filles qu'enfanta Memoire...
(III, 119)

there can be no doubt that although he is in deepest sincerity fashioning a Pindaric crown of victory for his benefactor, triumphant together with Marguerite in one of the most significant agons in the cultural and literary life of the French Renaissance, there can be no doubt that the true victors are Ron-

sard and those associated with him in the extraordinary venture of attempting to naturalize the Pindaric ode in France. If the praise of the designated victor, l'Hospital, is not, and was not intended, as the equivalent of self-praise by Ronsard, this ode is none the less the profoundest celebration of everything that he was attempting to achieve, not only a «suprême acte de foi dans la valeur du pindarisme», as Henri Chamard justly said,[52] but also an expression of moral, intellectual, and aesthetic assent in the heritage of classical antiquity.

This is essentially the meaning of the Titanomachy (vv. 217-318), the mythico-epic heart of the first ten triads sung by the Muses to the accompaniment of the lute in the presence of Zeus, Apollo, and the other gods. It is a καλλίνικος, a «bel hynne de victoire» (v. 318 and n. 2), very possibly inspired by Pindar's first Pythian,[53] but taking most of its substance from Hesiod's *Theogony*. In a Manichean struggle, it exalts the victory of the forces of the good, the beautiful, and the true, over those of evil, falsehood, and everything loathsome. The later triads (16-18), given the circumstances which led to the composition of the ode, present a greatly condensed history of Greek poetry, that is to say, an account of the activity of the Muses in enlarging the sphere and enriching the quality of civilized life. This was the answer of Princess Marguerite, honored once more in vv. 787-790, of her Chancellor, and of Ronsard, to the reactionary poets, unable and unwilling to readjust their vision from the twilight of a declining age, to the light of Greece, «ame vive, ingenieuse & clere» (XIII, 137).

Marguerite and l'Hospital had sustained Ronsard in a time of trouble, but they were not involved, except as magnanimous and sympathetic partisans, in the heart of the poet's effort. Joachim du Bellay, however, had largely contributed to that effort,[54] and Ronsard in four odes, each entitled *A Joachim du Bellai Angevin*, and all published in the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes*, fraternally shared with him the concerns of their common endeavor and the fruits of their common victory.[55]

The first of these chronologically (inc. *Si les ames vagabondes*), provides nothing for our present theme. Since it preceded by some time the publication of the princeps edition of Du Bellay's *Olive* (*L.*, II, 66, n. 2), there were

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[52] *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 364.

[53] Compare vv. 324-325 with Pyth., I, 10-12.

[54] See my articles «Did Du Bellay Know Pindar?» *PMLA*, LVI (1941), 1007-1019; «Pindaric Parallelism in Du Bellay», *French Review*, XIV (1941), 461-472; «Ronsard and Du Bellay on their Pindaric Collaboration», *RR*, XXXIII (1942), 3-25.

[55] A fifth ode for Du Bellay, *De la convalescence d'un sien ami*, appeared in the third book of *Odes* (II, 40-43), but as the title suggests, it has almost no relation to literary matters.

as yet no victories to celebrate on behalf of the poet of Liré. Ronsard could only urge his friend to present his work to the public:

D'une nuit oblivieuse
Pour quoi tes vers caches-tu?
(II, 66)

In principle the same is true of the second ode to Du Bellay, but enough time had passed to enable Ronsard, who by then had probably seen some of his friend's sonnets in manuscript, to speak specifically, though in metaphoric terms, of the still unpublished *Olive* as of a coming literary victory:

Entre lesquels [poètes] le ciel ordonne
Que le premier lieu l'on te donne,
Si tu monstres au jour tes vers
Entés dans le tronc d'une olive,
Qui hausse sa perruque vive
Jusque à l'egal des lauriers vers.
(II, 39)

By then Ronsard had discerned from his reading of Pindar a thought that is central to the Theban's poetry: man's thirst for good fame or glory, prized above the most precious of goods:

Nous avons quelque fois grand' faute
Soit de biens, soit de faveur haute,
Comme l'affaire nous conduit:
Mais tousjours tandis que nous sommes
Ou mors, ou mis au rang des hommes,
Nous avons besoin de bon bruit.

Car la louange emmiellée
Au sucre des Muses mellée
Nous perçe l'oreille en riant,
Je-di louange qui ne cede
A l'or que Pactole possede,
Ni aus perles de l'Orient.
(II, 35-36)

But in this ode Ronsard went beyond the praises of Du Bellay alone, by exemplifying in verse, without premeditated design, the elements of a broad theory of lyric praise that should eulogize not only the recipient of the poem, but also his family, and the writer of the ode as well:

Mais ma plume qui conjecture
Par son vol sa gloire future,
Se vante de n'endurer pas
Que la tienne en l'obscur demeure,
Ou comme orpheline elle meure
Errante sans honneur là bas.

Nous avons bien moi, & mon mettre,
Cette audace de te promettre

Que tes labeurs seront appris
De nous, de nos suivantes races,
S'il est vrai que j'aie des Graces
Cueilli les fleurs dans leur pourpris[56]...

Jadis Pindare sur la [lire] sienne
Acorda la guerre ancienne
Des Geans de foudre couvers,
Et je sonnerai ta louange,
Et l'envoirai de Loire à Gange,
Desus les ailes de mes vers.

Car il semble que nostre lire
Ta race seulle vueille elire
Pour l'engraver là haut aus cieus:
Macrin a sacré la memoire
De l'oncle,[57] & j'honnore la gloire
Du neveu qui s'honnore mieus.
(II, 36-38)

The two later odes to Du Bellay were composed between 20 March 1549, date of the *privilège* of the *Deffence* and the *Olive*,[58] and 10 January 1550, date of the *privilège* of Ronsard's *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* (I, 60). The first (inc. *Aujourdui je me vanterai*), is probably, among Ronsard's Pindaric odes, next in intrinsic importance after the one for Michel de l'Hospital. If the two earlier poems to Joachim foreshadowed his approaching victory, the ode we are about to examine is a fully realized triumphal song celebrating with generous praise Du Bellay's entrance on the French literary scene.

«Never», says Ronsard in the prelude, «Never shall I laud a man more beloved of the nine maidens and myself». But the praise, though lavish, is not entirely disinterested. To the Muse Ronsard confides that Du Bellay is one of his greatest admirers (vv. 17-28), who has fought by his side

... les gros sourcis renfoncer
De cette jalouse ignorance,
Qui ose desja par la France
L'honneur de mes vers offenser.
(I, 110)

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[56] This ode is a lacework of Pindaric reminiscences, which Laumonier's excellent notes dispense me from citing, with the exception of the passage in Ol., IX, 26-27, which Ronsard imitated in vv. 29-30: «I, by the ordering of destiny, am tilling the choicest garden of the Graces.» The first strophe of the ode to Michel de l'Hospital is a beautiful amplification of Pindar's graceful lines.

[57] See Ronsard's ode *Au reverendissime Cardinal du Bellai*, II, 121.

[58] *Def.*, p. 1; *RPL*, p. 61.

It is equal folly, Ronsard says to his comrade, to carry water to the sea and to compose verses for you; nevertheless,

> ... t'envoirai-je les miens
> Pour rencherir plus les tiens,
> Dont les douceurs nompareilles
> Sçavent flater les oreilles
> Des Rois béans à t'ouir:
> Seule en France est nostre Lire
> Qui les fredons sache elire
> Pour les Princes rejouir.
>
> (I, 110-111)

Ronsard and Du Bellay are Jovian eagles in comparison with their rivals in poetry, who chatter like frightened crows in the shadow of the birds of Zeus (vv. 53-60).

The second epode and all of the third triad are devoted to praise of the distinguished members of Du Bellay's family (vv. 7-134). Then, in a poetic movement imitated from the second Olympian (89-90), Ronsard, as though impatient to return to the eulogy of Du Bellay, again addresses the Muse:

> Mais repren l'arc, Muse, il est tens
> Guigner au blanc où tu pretens:
> Puis que sa louange foisonne
> En cent vertus propres à lui,
> A quoi par les honneurs d'autrui
> Rempli-je ce que je lui donne?
> Sa gloire sufit pour borner
> Les vers qui le veulent orner.
>
> (I, 116)

Elevated to a plane loftier than that of Horace, Ronsard has been destined to bring about the revival of the poetry of Hellenic antiquity by Apollo himself (vv. 165-176):

> Lequel m'encharge de chanter
> Mon Jouachim pour le vanter
> Entre ceus-là qui ont gouté
> De la fureur de sa bonté:
> Obeissant à la vois sainte
> Mon trait par le ciel galopant
> L'air angevin n'ira coupant
> Sans que sa gloire en soit atainte:
> Bruiant l'homme estre bien heureus,
> Sur lequel le miel doucereus
> Qui par tout tumbe de ton stile
> Heureusement coule & distile.
> Que dirai plus? le ciel t'a fait
> (Te fortunant de main non chiche)
> Jeune, dispost, sçavant, & riche,
> Desus son moule plus parfait.
>
> (I, 118-119)

«L'image pindarique de la nef rentrant au port accompagne la fin même de l'ode, considérée comme le retour au calme après la tempête des attaques contre les deux poètes [vv. 193-208].»[59]

IV. Praise of the Victor's Family, Ancestors, and City

«C'est [le] continuel souci [de Pindare] d'unir le vainqueur, la famille, la cité.»[60] To Melissus of Thebes Pindar says that Poseidon, by granting the ancestral house of Cleonymus «this wondrous ode of victory, raiseth from her resting-place the olden fame of noble deeds» (Isth., IV, 19-23). To explain a strikingly beautiful metaphor in the second Nemean (10-12), composed for Timodemus of Acharnae: «And meet it is that Orion should not move far behind the Pleiads», Farnell (I, 164) writes, «The athlete's family, the Timodamidai, pursue athletic glory as naturally as Orion pursues the Pleiades!»

In a characteristically transparent passage Croiset (p. 113) analyzes the reasons why the lyric poets who celebrated victories in the Great Games praised not only the winners, but also the members of their family, their ancestors, and their city. «Avec le vainqueur lui-même, il importe de louer tous les siens. Il faut glorifier sa race, sa cité natale, sur lesquelles rejaillit sa gloire récente, et qui l'éclairent à leur tour du reflet de leur propre illustration; il faut rattacher l'individu à son groupe naturel... Les générations successives sont solidaires les unes des autres. Remonter du présent au passé, c'est expliquer l'un par l'autre. Le poète lyrique qui, ayant à célébrer un vainqueur, célèbre en même temps et les ancêtres de qui il tient sa vertu et la cité qui est fière de lui, ne fait que se conformer à la vraie nature des choses, telle que le monde alors la concevait. Quand on a proclamé le vainqueur, on a fait retentir en même temps devant les Grecs assemblés le nom de la ville où il est né.»

In his earliest triumphal ode, the tenth Pythian for Hippocleas in 498, Pindar sees the working of hereditary influence in the victor's success: «His inborn valour hath trodden in the foot-prints of his father, who was twice victor at Olympia» (12-13). The eighth Pythian for Aristomenes of Aegina, written in 446, the latest or one of the latest of the triumphal odes, praises the victor in the wrestling-match for maintaining the family tradition[61] esta-

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[59] Henri Weber, «Structure des odes chez Ronsard», *CAIEF*, 22 (1970), p. 105.

[60] Méautis, p. 428.

[61] Cf. *Paideia*, I, 214.

blished by his uncles at Olympia and at the Isthmus. He had thus earned a eulogy like the one spoken by the spirit of Amphiaraus as he beheld his son Alcmaeon's courage in the expedition of the Epigoni against Thebes: «By the gift of Nature... there standeth forth to view that noble spirit, which passeth from sires to sons» (44-45).

Thus one may say[62] that Pindar's career, from beginning to end, gave expression to his deep belief in the power of heredity. Croiset (pp. 226-227), had this passage of the eighth Pythian in mind, among many others, when he wrote: «Ni le travail ni l'étude ne suffisent à l'homme pour arriver à la gloire, si d'autres forces, plus hautes et plus mystérieuses, n'ont mis d'abord en lui les germes féconds que le travail ensuite développera. Pindare ramène sans cesse l'esprit humain à la pensée de ces forces obscures qui l'enveloppent et dont il dépend. La *nature* et la *race* sont deux de ses forces.»[63] (Emphasis in text). The posthumous joy of Amphiaraus in his son's valor is a natural manifestation of the sense of organic unity of the family that binds the generations together.[64] «The grave is not all silence to Pindar; the ghost of sound, Echo, may visit the abode of the dead, and bear glad tidings to those who have gone before.»[65] One of Pindar's most moving and graceful odes, the fourteenth Olympian for Asopichus of Orchomenus, victorious in the boys' foot-race, ends on that note:

> Go now, Echo, to the black walls
> Of Persephone's house,
> And bring the glorous news to his father.
> (trans. Bowra)

When Strepsiades of Thebes, Pindar's native city, won in the pancratium, the poet's sense of patriotism brought «an outburst of pride over the great traditions of Thebes, showing how deeply Pindar's soul was possessed by the mythology of his mother-city».[66] «O happy Thebe, tell me over which of the olden glories of thy land thou hast chiefly gladdened thy heart? Was it... when thou didst bring into being Dionysus of the flowing locks, who is enthroned beside Demeter of the clashing cymbals? or when thou gavest welcome to the greatest of the gods amid a snow-shower of gold at dead of night, what time he stood at Amphitryon's portal and drew near Amphitryon's wife for the begetting of Heracles?» (Isth., VII, 1-7).

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[62] With R.W.B. Burton, *Pindar's Pythian Odes: Essays in Interpretation* (Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 2.

[63] Cf. Finley, p. 152; Fränkel, p. 473; Marrou, p. 78.

[64] Cf. Ol., VIII, 77-80; Pyth., V, 96-103; Nem., III, 40; XI, 37-38; Isth., III, 13-14.

[65] Gildersleeve, p. xxxiv.

[66] Farnell, I, 277.

In 458 (?) Pindar received a commission from the inhabitants of Ceos for a paean in honor of Apollo. In the same year, however, Herodotus of Thebes had been victorious in the chariot-race at the Isthmus. Which commission was Pindar to execute first? Divided in heart between his devotion to the god of poetry and his filial loyalty to Thebes, Pindar writes: «O Mother mine, O Thebe of the golden shield, I shall deem thy behest enough to outweigh all lack of leisure. Let not rocky Delos[67] be indignant at me, for in her praise have I been fully spent. What is dearer to the good than noble parents? Give place, Apollo's isle...» (Isth., I, 1-6).

«It was while Thebes[68] and Athens stood at daggers drawn that [Pindar] wrote his famous dithyramb on Athens, describing her as the bulwark of Hellas:»[69] «Oh! the gleaming, and the violet-crowned, renowned in song, the bulwark of Hellas, famous Athens, city divine!... There [at the battle of Artemisium], where the sons of Athens laid the bright foundation of Liberty» (frags. 76, 77, p. 557). In the great first Pythian ode which celebrated the victory of the Syracusans over the Carthaginians, Pindar is reminded of the destruction of the Persian navy at Salamis by the Athenian fleet in 480 B.C., soon followed by the defeat of the Persian army at the hands of the Spartans at the battle of Plataea.

These eulogies of Athens and of Sparta were not inspired by victories in the Games, but by triumphs in battle upon which the survival of Hellenic civilization depended. But both before and after the Persian Wars, the athletic victories of an Athenian or of an inhabitant of Attica prompted some of Pindar's warmest encomia of the family and city of the successful contestant. When Megacles of Athens won the chariot-race at Delphi six years before Salamis, Pindar wrote in the seventh Pythian (1-8): «The mighty city of Athens is the fairest prelude of song, which the widely powerful race of the Alcmaeonidae can lay as a foundation of odes in honour of their steeds. What fatherland, what family, in which thou dwellest, shall I name as more illustrious of report in Greece?»[70]

Other cities, other houses of victorious athletes, are eulogized in almost every poem: Aegina and its notable families, especially in the Isthmian odes; Syracuse, Aetna, Acragas and their princely victors in the Olympians and Pythians; and Corinth in the thirteenth Olympian, of which Gildersleeve observes (p. 233): «His mission is to celebrate the victor's family, but he is to learn to know Corinth, he is to praise Corinth, he is to forget for a while

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[67] Apollo's birthplace and a center of his worship.

[68] Which supported the Persian cause during the Persian Wars.

[69] Norwood, p. 15.

[70] Cf. Nem., II, 6-8; IV, 18-19; Isth., II, 20.

the ἴδιον in the κοινόν», a comment which, with words borrowed from the ode itself (49), defines the universalizing tendency of Pindar's poetry and of artistic endeavor in general.

The Pindaric ode *Au Roi* which Ronsard addressed to Henri II and which opens the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* is literally permeated with reminiscences of Pindar's triumphal odes. Ronsard's poem, however, celebrates no royal victory. It is simply an illustration and a fulfillment of the principle that the poet had adopted when he had taken Pindar as his model: that the purpose of the lyric poet must be to praise the subject of his ode «jusques à l'extremité» (I, 48). Ronsard virtually reiterates the principle in the ode itself:

> Autre bien je ne desire,
> Que d'apparoistre à tes yeus,
> Le saint Harpeur de ta gloire,
> Et l'archer de ta memoire
> Pour la tirer dans les cieus.
> (I, 62).

But the House of Valois is not overlooked, and is, in fact, honored in the first strophe simultaneously with the reigning king:

> Ainsi versant la rousée,
> Dont ma langue est arousée,
> Sus la race des VALOIS,
> En mon dous Nectar j'abreuve
> Le plus grand Roi qui se treuve,
> Soit en armes ou en lois.
> (I, 61)

The second book also begins with an ode *Au Roi*. It is not Pindaric in form, being composed of nineteen *sizains*, but its substance is heavily indebted to a number of Pindar's victory odes, and Ronsard does his best to present his own composition as an ode of military triumph:

> Sur des Termes de memoire[71]
> J'engraverai ta victoire,
> Ton los, & l'Anglois défait,[72]
> Et cela que par ta lance
> Devant les yeus de la France
> Ta main heureuse a parfaict...
> (I, 168)

And one may discern in the following verses from the same ode:

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[71] «C'est le λίθος Μοισαῖος de Pindare, *Ném.*, VIII, 47. Une ode est un μνημεῖον, *Pyth.*, V, 49.» Note by Laumonier.

[72] A reference to the conquest of the forts of Boulogne from the English in 1549 (I, 34, n. 1).

La nature liberale
Emprainte en l'ame roiale
Ne va jamais defaillant,
Le lion quoi qu'on lui face
Jamais ne change l'audace
De son courage vaillant.
(I, 171)

an allusion to the hereditary forces of nature and of race which, according to Croiset, were such important elements in Pindar's thinking about the transmission of innate qualities.

In the final antistrophe of the *Ode de la Paix* (III, 34), a thinly veiled admonition against retarding the composition of the *Franciade* seeks to impress on Henri II how fragile an immortality awaits the king's ancestors because they have been deprived «Des Muses ne de leur science» — with the exception of his father, François I[er], whose glory as a lover of poetry is aflame throughout the universe.

The thin veil of admonition is brutally torn away at the end of the general dedication *Au Roy* which opens the third edition of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* in 1555, when Ronsard invokes the sorrow of Francus, that remote and imaginary ancestor of all the French kings, if Henri II, by refusing to commission the *Franciade*, should deny to France herself the science of the Muses:

Aussi tu porterois la honte sur les yeus,
Si lui qui fut jadis l'aieul de tes aieus,
Le fils d'un si grand Roi, venoit seulet en France
Donner à tes aieus la premiere naissance.[73]
(VII, 10)

The triumphal odes of Pindar, it goes without saying, were written to celebrate the athletic victories of men. It is equally obvious that Ronsard, in his Pindaric odes, faced a totally different situation: he had no athletic victories to celebrate, nor could he, as a courtier, address himself exclusively to men. If his first Pindaric ode was necessarily inscribed to Henri II, the second had to be dedicated to Catherine de Médicis, the Queen, and the third to Princess Marguerite, Henri's sister.

To compensate for the absence of athletic contests, Ronsard in the ode *A la Roine*, assimilates Catherine to the nymph Cyrene, beloved of Apollo, Cyrene who «cared not for pacing to and fro before the loom», and preferred to contend against fierce beasts of prey and mighty lions with javelin and sword (Pyth., IX, 18-28). In Ronsard's ode Catherine, descendant of the

[73] The theme is developed less harshly, as an entreaty bordering almost on supplication, in the dedication *Au Roy* of the third book, VII, 24-34; see especially vv. 154-168.

Medici, naturally becomes the nymph Florence, named for «La ville qui te fit naistre». Her magnificent family and ancestry are called to mind somewhat as those of the victors in the Games are remembered by Pindar:

STROPHE 2

Là, l'honneur de tes aieus[74]
Va flamboiant comme aus cieus
Flamboie l'Aurore claire,
Et l'honneur de ton Julien[75]
Qui par l'air Italien
Comme une planete eclaire...
Et là, reluisent aussi
Tes deus grands Papes,[76] qui ores
Du ciel où ils sont, encores
Te favorizent ici.

ANTISTROPHE [2]

Comme on ne conte les fleurs
Du Printens, ne les couleurs
Qui peignent la verte place:
Ainsi je ne puis penser,
De nombrer ni recenser
Les louanges de ta race.[77]

(I, 67-68)

If it had crossed Ronsard's mind at this time, he must have rejected the thought of writing a Pindaric ode for Henri II's favorite, Diane de Poitiers, in spite of the fact that «la favorite était la véritable reine».[78] The scandal might have been too great if Ronsard, by according her the honor of such an ode, had virtually included her in the royal family. The poet could have incurred the serious displeasure of Henri II and the enmity of Catherine de Médicis. By that time the liaison between Henri and Diane had lasted many years, and Catherine had no doubt adopted toward the king's mistress the attitude which she was to express long after the death of her husband: «Cet [Si] je fesè bonne chère à Madame de Valentinois, *c'estoit le Roy*! (à cause du Roy). Et encore je luy fését tousjour conestre que s'estoyt à mon très grent regret; car jeamès femme qui aymèt son mary n'éma sa puteyn; car on

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[74] Cosimo the Elder (1398-1464) and Lorenzo the Magnificent (1449-1492).

[75] Giuliano (1453-1478).

[76] Giovanni, who in 1513 became Pope Leo X (1475-1521), and Giulio, who in 1523 became Pope Clement VII (1478-1534).

[77] «Pour le mouvement [de ces six vers], Ronsard semble s'être souvenu de Pindare, *Ném.*, IV, 70-72; X, 19; *Olymp.*, II, fin; XIII, 46.» Note by Laumonier. — Since Ronsard unquestionably resorted to the ninth Pythian for the myth of Cyrene-Florence, the imagery of these lines is probably derived from v. 46 of that ode; cf. *les fleurs Du Printens* with ἠρινὰ φύλλα.

[78] *Hist. de la Pl.*, II, 277.

ne le peust apeler aultrement, encore que le mot souyt vylayn à dire à nous aultres.»[79]

Sooner or later, however, Ronsard was bound to court the favor of one whose influence with the king was so great. Under the double constraints of his Pindaric program and courtly ambition, he introduced her almost surreptitiously as a peripheral member of the royal family. The poem that Ronsard finally addressed *A Diane de Poitiers, Duchesse de Valentinois* in 1555[80] followed immediately upon a series of six odes dedicated respectively *Au Roy*, *A la Roine*, and to their children.[81] The ode to Diane was thus more or less tactfully removed from too close proximity to those of Henri and Catherine.

Ronsard has no victory of Diane's to celebrate. He ostensibly rejects as too effortless the notion of praising her,[82] in favor of the better idea («un plus beau soin») of praising her ancestors, for whom he discovers a royal lineage:

> Quand je voudrois celebrer ton renom,
> Je ne diroi que Diane est ton nom,
> Car on feroit sans se travailler guiere
> De ton seul nom une Iliade entiere.
> Mais, recharchant tes honneurs de plus loin,
> Je chanteroi, piqué d'un plus beau soin,
> Tes vieus ayeus si vaillants à la guerre,
> Qui ont porté le septre en meinte terre
> Enfans de Rois, ou de Rois heritiers.
>
> (VII, 81 and n. 3)

One would be left to conjecture what Ronsard intended by «un plus beau soin» if the 1578 variant of v. 6 did not inform us that he meant «un Pindarique soin». He was eulogizing the ancestry from which Diane was descended, careful to carry out faithfully that aspect of the lyric program he had adopted from Pindar in 1550, which advised the poet to seek out and to praise among the subject's progenitors «quelqu'un de ses aieus, jadis braves, & vaillans» (I, 48).

But this first effort to enlist the favor of Diane, as well as others that were to follow,[83] were all in vain. «Diane resta insensible aux louanges de Ronsard... Aussi, regrettant plus tard d'avoir sollicité un tel patronage,

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[79] Dodu, p. 339; emphasis and parenthetical phrase in text. The passage occurs also in *Hist. de la Pl.*, II, 275, n. 5. It is there dated 25 April 1584, and is quoted in a less bizarre orthography from J.H. Mariéjol, *Catherine de Médicis*, p. 41.

[80] «A remarquer que Ronsard n'a pas 'consacré' avant 1555 un seul vers à la toute puissante favorite.» Note by Laumonier, VII, 84, n. 1.

[81] Each of these poems is, of course, more than generous in its praise of the *dédicataire*, of his or her ancestry and posterity, past or future achievements, etc.

[82] In reality the ode is hyperbolically eulogistic of Diane.

[83] VII, 296; X, 70, 79.

supprima-t-il après la mort de Diane (1566) toutes les pièces qui en témoignaient.»[84]

François de Bourbon-Enghien, younger brother of the suzerain of the Ronsard family, Antoine de Bourbon-Vendôme, defeated the Spanish and Imperial armies at the battle of Cérisoles in 1544. Ronsard must have found in this military victory a relatively close approximation of the athletic victories extolled by Pindar. Possibly in 1545 (*RPL*, p. 58), more probably a year or two later,[85] Ronsard composed the Pindaric ode on *La victoire de François de Bourbon* which, in addition to the eulogy lavished on the conquering hero, contained verses of a particularly Pindaric tonality inviting the departed Bourbon ancestors to share in the glory of their descendant:

STROPHE 3

Muses ne vaut-il pas mieus
Que moi harpeur de la gloire
Aus vieus Bourbons ses aieus
Je face ouir sa victoire?
Seule douce recompense
Des coups & de la depense,[86]
Car la poudre des tumbeaus
N'engarde que les faits beaus
Des fils heureus & prosperes,
Viennent là bas rejouir
Les oreilles de leurs peres
Alterés de les ouir.

(I, 87-88)

Ronsard's verses are in part almost a paraphrase of a passage in the eighth Olympian expressing Pindar's belief that even in the abode of Hades the voice of the Muses, or of Memory, their mother, is heard. The dead have been liberated from the cares of this world, but they still hear with joy of the noble accomplishments of their posterity. To transmit to them these tidings there is no worthier medium than a poem: «But it is meet for me to awaken Memory, and to tell of the fruit of the victorious hands of the race of Blepsias... Even the dead have share in rites duly paid in their honour, and the dust does not hide the noble grace of their kinsmen» (74-81).

The Pindaric ode *A Jouachim du Bellai Angevin* (inc. *Aujourdui je me vanterai*) contains an unusually long development, comprising the second epode and the third strophe and antistrophe, in praise of two distinguished

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[84] Note by Laumonier, VII, 84, n. 1.

[85] A reasonable amount of time must be allowed to account for the Pindaric proficiency that Ronsard reveals in this ode.

[86] Ronsard has in mind Ol., V, 15 or Isth., I, 42.

members of Joachim's family, Guillaume and Jean Du Bellay. But it is only in the epode that one hears genuinely Pindaric tones, though it is almost impossible to name with certainty the ode or odes of the Theban poet that Ronsard may have had in mind when he wrote:

> L'aiant prise[87] pour ma guide
> Avec le chant inconnu
> De mon Luc, je suis venu
> Où le flanc de Loire ride
> Baignant les champs plantureus
> De tes ancestres heureus,[88]
> Puis sautelant me ramaine
> De ton Anjou, jusque au Maine
> (De mon Vandomois voisins)
> Affin que là je decore
> Et Guillaume, & Jan encore,
> L'ornement de tes cousins.
>
> (I, 113)

The «mouvement pindarique» of the epode, to judge from the citations given by Laumonier in his note on the passage, is in the first three verses ending with the expression «je suis venu». Of the references given by Laumonier, the most probable is perhaps the fourteenth Olympian: «For I have come to sing the praise of Asopichus with Lydian tune and with meditated lays, because, thanks to thee, the house of the Minyae is victorious in Olympia» (17-20).[89] The more significant elements of the epode — the metaphoric arrival of the poet, his song of praise, and the ancestral allusion — are present in the verses of both poets.

Here, one may note in passing, Ronsard writes of Du Bellay's Anjou, of his own Vendôme, and of the neighboring province of Maine. There is no mention, as there frequently is in Pindar, of the city that gave birth to the victor or his poet. The Theban singer celebrates Athens, Corinth, Syracuse, Aegina, and his native city as well, when one of her sons is victorious in an athletic contest. These were great city-states, politically independent and sovereign, each with a rich historical development, differentiated from the others by individual characteristics and qualities. The significance of Pindar's odes could be greatly enriched by what he might relevantly say of them in connection with the person to whom his ode was addressed, or with the ancestors from whom the victor was descended.

Ronsard had something to write about the family of Du Bellay, but there was little to say about Liré, Joachim's birthplace, to which his friend never

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[87] The Muse, I, 112, v. 71.

[88] Cf. II, 38, vv. 49-54.

[89] But the passages in which Pindar comes or goes to celebrate a victor or to sing the praises of his subject are quite numerous. They are listed in *POR*, p. 39, n. 1.

refers, and which was then, as it is today, little more than a hamlet. The name of Couture, Ronsard's native village, occurs but once in his poems (X, 123). Couture is lost in the countryside of Vendômois as Liré is in that of Anjou. What saved each from oblivion was the fame of the poet that each produced. So that Ronsard, addressing his book in the sonnet *Cesse tes pleurs, mon livre*, could say that after a thousand years the astonished visitor to Couture

> ... voiant mon païs à peine voudra croire
> Que d'un si petit champ tel poëte soit né.
> (VI, 56-57)

And the fame of «mon petit Lyré», as well as that of Du Bellay, its poet, would have been assured had he written nothing but the sonnet that has since been on every French tongue.

The almost obligatory mention in Pindar of the city of the victorious athlete, in contrast with the almost total absence of allusions to the cities of the *dédicataires* of Ronsard's Pindaric odes,[90] is of course a point of minor importance. But it is not negligible. For as surely as the major distinctions between the triumphal odes of ancient Greece and those of modern times, it reveals the profound differences between the two societies, differences that in spite of occasional noteworthy successes of emulation, inevitably reduced to largely artificial exercises most attempts to resuscitate the form and substance of the epinician ode.

The principle that prompted Ronsard's eulogies in his Pindaric odes was often active in his other poems. In his dedication of the first book of *Hymnes* (1555) to Odet Cardinal de Chastillon he writes:

> Or' ma plume escrira tout ce qu'elle pourra
> (Que la trouppe des Sœurs n'a jamais abusée)
> Puis, quand je la voiray de te loüer usée,
> J'iray trouver ton frere ou François ou Gaspar,
> Au front d'une bataille, ou dessus un rampar...
> (VIII, 4)

In the same book of *Hymnes* Ronsard dedicated to the Cardinal *Le Temple de Messeigneurs le Connestable,*[91] *et des Chastillons*, and promised in the opening verses to establish in their honor and in honor of their ancestors a revived version of the Olympian Games:

> Là d'un vœu solennel au meillieu d'une prée,
> Je veux fonder les jeux d'une feste sacrée,

[90] The reference to Florence in the ode *A la Roine* is exceptional.

[91] Anne de Montmorency.

Chommable tous les ans, & pendre le laurier,
Digne prix de celuy qui sera le premier
Publié le vainqueur (comme au lustre Olympique)
Soit de lutte, ou de course, ou de lance, ou de pique.
Tout le Temple sera basty de marbre blanc,
Où gravez en ærain j'attacheray de rang
Tes Ayeulx elevez à l'entour des murailles...
(VIII, 73)

Toward the end of the poem Ronsard returns to this theme:

Apres, dedans le Temple, imitant les Antiques,
Je feray sacrifice aux Espritz Olympiques,
Aux Herôs le second, & le troisieme honneur
Sera du sacrifice à Jupiter sauveur.[92]
Lors moy, le seul autheur d'un si divin office,
Je feray dignement le premier sacrifice,
Environné du peuple, à tes nobles Ayeux,
Qui habitent l'Olympe assiz au rang des Dieux.
Puis aux Herôs, qui sont tes deux Freres qui vivent,
Et des preux Demi-dieux les beaux gestes ensuyvent:
Et le troisieme honneur apres ces deux icy
Se fera pour ton oncle Anne Mommorency,
Mon Jupiter sauveur, car c'est luy qui ma teste
Veut sauver de la dent de ceste fiere beste
Que Styx contre le Ciel âprement irrité
Conçeut, & la nomma l'horrible Pauvreté.
(VIII, 83)

Even for those who have sensed how strongly the current of interest in classical antiquity had swept through European intellectual and literary circles at this time, the vision of a poet, who belonged to the minor orders of the clergy, offering in the presence of a Cardinal the «divin office» of a sacrifice to Zeus Soter, must entail no small element of surprise. One detects this surprise in Albert Py's comments on *Le Temple des Chastillons*, in which, he correctly says, Ronsard «Non seulement... édifie un temple, institue des jeux et des fêtes chômées, non seulement... met au service de sa divinité (la *gens* des Coligny) l'architecture, la sculpture et la peinture sacrées, non seulement... fait office de chantre en exécutant l'hymne auprès de l'autel et prononce hardiment le sermon du prêtre, mais... assume le sacerdoce jusqu'à son terme extrême qui est le sacrifice».[93] So deep was the general acceptance, on this level of experience, of the forms and mores of antiquity, that such incongruities, except among steadfast Protestants, passed almost unperceived. Nor is it likely that many recognized in such passages examples of Greek lyric doctrine as interpreted by Ronsard.

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[92] «Jupiter 'sauveur', c'est le Zeus Sôter, qui détourne les maux dont les hommes sont menacés.» Note by Laumonier.

[93] *Ronsard: Hymnes*, p. 39.

It is a fair conjecture that from 1550 to 1565 Ronsard lavished on Charles Cardinal de Lorraine a more incessant stream of flattery than on almost any other individual of the Court of France.[94] The pattern of eulogy was set in the Pindaric ode to the Cardinal that follows immediately upon those dedicated to Henri II, Catherine de Médicis, and Princess Marguerite. It was developed on three separate occasions in poems of ever-increasing length and ever-mounting adulation that invariably proclaimed Ronsard's desire to praise the Cardinal for his own merits, but did not fail to chronicle, more assiduously than accurately, the merits and achievements of the House of Lorraine.

In the Pindaric ode the poet begins by assuring the prelate that even if Heaven had granted him no other gift, his royal ancestry would suffice to make his fame imperishable:

> Car si je veil raconter
> De ton grand Billon l'histoire,[95]
> Qui peut les Turcs surmonter
> Par une heureuse victoire,
> Ou la fameuse memoire
> De ses combas, ou les Rois
> Desquels la riche Sicile
> A leur obeir docile
> Ecouta les saintes lois[96]:
>
> ANTISTROPHE [1]
>
> Leur vertu qui au ciel monte
> Te feroit seule immortel...
>
> (I, 79-80)

But Ronsard is certain that Charles' modesty would not allow him to rest on laurels acquired by his ancestors. The poet will prepare for him an altar, safe against the erosion of time, upon which would be inscribed in indestructible words the gleaming praise that Charles had earned by his own virtues (I, 80-81).

Paul Laumonier stated (I, 81, n. 1) that this ode, Pindaric in substance as much as in its triadic form,[97] «semble être la préface» of the *Hymne de la Justice à... Charles Cardinal de Lorraine* (1555). Laumonier had discerned a genuine relationship between the ode of 49 verses and the hymn of 544, for if the ode has nothing specifically to say about the virtue of justice, it does laud

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[94] See above, Chap. XIII, sec. ii.

[95] «Godefroi, duc de Bouillon... l'un des chefs de la 1ère croisade, vainqueur des Turcs à Nicée... premier roi du royaume latin de Jérusalem.» Note by Laumonier. Cf. V, 206, v. 57 and 207, v. 73.

[96] See I, 80, n. 2; VIII, 49, n. 1; and IX, 31, n. 2 for the dubious claims of the House of Lorraine to the kingdoms of Sicily, Naples, and France.

[97] I, 81, n. 2, 82, n. 1; *POR*, pp. 72-73, 129-130.

Charles' virtues in general (vv. 17, 39), while the hymn explicitly singles out one of them, «Une seule & non plus» (v. 37), for celebration «dessus ma basse lyre» (v. 36).

The ode prepares the way for the hymn in still another way — by establishing the eulogistic model that the later poem will adopt and amplify. The Pindaric content is no longer in evidence, to be sure, in the form of precise textual obligations,[98] but the Pindaric theme of familial and ancestral praise that set the ode in motion is more than ever audible in the prelude of the hymn:

Un plus sçavant que moy, & plus chery des Cieux,
Chantera les combatz de tes nobles Ayeux,
Dira de Godeffroy la merveilleuse armée,
Et la palme conquise en la terre Idumée...
Chantera de Damas la muraille forcée,
Et de Hierusalem, d'Antioche & Nicée
Les assaux, & la prise, & comme Godefroy
De Tyr, & de Sidon finablement fut Roy...
Apres, en ramenant tes Ayeux d'outre mer,
Les fera, pour la gloire, aux batailles armer
Pres la grande Hesperie,[99] & vaincre cette terre
Qui d'une grand' montaigne un grand Geant enserre,
Lequel luy fut jadis par les Dieux envoyé
Quand il tomba du Ciel à-demy foudroyé.
Puis leur fera planter l'Escusson de Lorraine
Sur le fameux tombeau de l'antique Serene,[100]
Conquis par leur proüesse, où le sceptre puissant
Des Lorrains fut long temps richement fleurissant,
Comme proches parens des nobles Roys de France,
Et vrays seigneurs d'Anjou, du Maine, & de Provence.[101]
Apres il chantera les magnanimes faitz
Que ton grand Frere, ainçois que tes Freres ont faitz[102]...
Mais moy, divin Prelat, qui ne puis entonner
Si hautement l'ærain pour leurs gloires sonner,
Je me contenteray en cest Hymne de dire
L'une de tes vertus dessus ma basse lyre.
Une seule & non plus: car, quand j'entreprendrois
De toutes les chanter, grandement je faudrois,

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[98] Though the allusion in vv. 16-18 to the «grand Geant» cast by the gods into Tartarus under Mt. Aetna may be a reminiscence of the prelude of the first Pythian, with which Ronsard was thoroughly familiar.

[99] «Il s'agit ici de l'Italie, appelée par les Grecs Ἑσπερία (terre du Couchant).» Note by Laumonier.

[100] «C.-à-d. à Naples, qui primitivement s'appelait Parthénopé... du nom d'une des Sirènes qui se jetèrent à la mer après qu'Ulysse leur eut échappé. Son corps fut roulé par les vagues sur les côtes d'Italie; près de son tombeau s'éleva la ville de Parthénopé, rebâtie plus tard sous le nom de Neapolis.» Note by Laumonier.

[101] «Allusion à la conquête du royaume des Deux-Siciles par Charles d'Anjou... Mais le rapport entre cette conquête et la maison de Lorraine est tout à fait fictif.» Note by Laumonier.

[102] See VIII, 49, n. 2, for Laumonier's comments on the four brothers of the Cardinal.

Comme chose trop haute, & m'eust fait la Nature
Plus que bronze ou metal la langue & la voix dure...
(VIII, 47-50)

From the first verses of *L'Hymne de tresillustre prince Charles Cardinal de Lorraine* (1559) Ronsard attains what can only be described as a paroxysm of adulation requiring not fewer than five images of rhetorical self-disparagement to express the depth of his ingratitude,

Si je ne te chantois & toute ta maison,
Mon CHARLES, mon Prelat, mon prince de Lorraine..
(IX, 29)

But, as he had said on the two earlier occasions,

Pour ne farder mes vers d'une menteuse grace,
Je ne veus emprunter les titres de ta race,
Et ne veus que ma faux de son acier trenchant
Te coupe autre moisson que celle de ton champ...
(IX, 31)

For if he desired to enrich the reputation of the Cardinal by mentioning all the deeds of his ancestors — Charlemagne (vv. 45-48), Godefroy de Bouillon (vv. 49-50), René d'Anjou (v. 51), Claude de Lorraine, father of Charles (vv. 51-52) —

Le jour me defaudroit, puis ma Muse petite
N'oseroit s'ataquer à si hautain merite:
Homme sinon toymesme écrire ne pourroit
Dignement leurs vertus...
(IX, 32)

Adulation is, of course, frequently endemic in absolutist regimes. Many of Ronsard's contemporaries, who may have known nothing of the usages of Greek lyric poetry and never have read a verse of Pindar, achieved unaided a superior proficiency in the art of flattery. But Ronsard had, in fact, heard of the practices of the Greek lyrists, and had studied Pindar's odes more thoroughly, perhaps, than any poet of the previous ten or twelve centuries. That he was still consciously following the program of lyric praise he had announced in the preface to the 1550 *Odes*, is demonstrable from his employment in 1559 in the hymn to the Cardinal of a poetic movement strongly reminiscent of his earliest Pindaric odes and full of echoes of the second Olympian and second Nemean odes. It would be superfluous to reproduce the evidence presented at some length in the preceding section, but the briefest inspection of two or three relevant passages will suffice to show that almost fifteen years after the beginning of Ronsard's attraction to the odes of Pindar and his espousal of the theory of lyric praise, the momentum of that interest was still alive.

«Quel vers ira premier», he says to Charles, «anoncer ta louange... Quel sera le dernier?» (IX, 35-36). In his Pindaric ode to Carnavalet he had written:

> Quel louange premiere
> T'ardera par l'univers...
> (I, 92)

More significantly, in the triumphal ode to Henri II:

> Muse, bande ton arc dous,
> Muse ma douce esperance,
> Quel Prince fraperons nous,
> L'enfonçant parmi la France?
> (I, 62)[103]

And, of course, the eulogy of the ecclesiastical branch of the family invited words of praise for the military branch in the person of François de Guise:

> Puis ton frere m'appelle au son de la trompette,
> Affin d'aller au camp pour estre son Poëtte...
> (IX, 70)

«Pour estre son Poëtte.» The words remind us of another agon and another great victor who struggled and won, not in the lists of Mars, but in those of the Muses, and who, in his ode *Au fleuve du Loir*, remembered with gratitude his race, his ancestors, and his heavenly gift:

> Si quelqu'homme, ou Dieu arive
> Aus bords de ta parlante rive,
> Di leur (quand plus tu bruis)
> Que sa Muse premiere
> Aluma la lumiere
> En ces champs d'où je suis.
> Di leur ma race, & mes aieus,
> Et le beau don que j'u des cieus...
> (II, 106)

V. Praise of Tyrants and Princes

Concerning Pindar's praise of tyrants who commissioned poems on the occasion of their victories in the Games, Croiset (p. 287), wrote, «C'est un poète lyrique, c'est-à-dire un poète d'éloges, qui vient à la cour d'un

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[103] The presence of the prelude of the second Olympian is felt even at the beginning of *Hercule Chrestien*:

> Mais, ô SEIGNEUR, quel chant, ou quelle Lyre,
> Ou quelle langue entreprendroit de dire
> Suffisamment ta louange...
> (VIII, 208)

Hiéron... pour chanter sa gloire, ses hauts faits, sa richesse, sa puissance, en un mot tout cet éclat qui l'environne, et que le poète, avec toute la Grèce, considère comme un reflet de la divinité. Il n'est pourtant pas davantage un flatteur. D'autres peut-être, en présence d'un prince orgueilleux, seraient éblouis ou feindraient de l'être; ils seraient uniquement soucieux de faire leur cour par des éloges immodérés. Pindare, sans affecter le zèle d'un moraliste intempérant, mêle à l'éclat des louanges la pensée grave des lois éternelles et divines qui régissent le monde».[104]

When Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse, was the winner in the horse-race in 476 at Olympia, Pindar composed the poem which was eventually to find first place among the Olympian odes. After the particularly splendid prelude he had words of eulogy for the victorious prince: «Thence [from Olympia] cometh the famous song of praise that enfoldeth the thoughts of wise poets, so that they loudly sing the son of Cronus, when they arrive at the rich and happy hearth of Hieron, who wieldeth the sceptre of law in fruitful Sicily, culling the prime of all virtues, while he rejoiceth in the full bloom of song...» (8-15). Pindar is certain «that there is no host of the present time, whom I shall glorify with sounding bouts of song, as one who is at once more familiar with things noble, or is more sovereign in power. A god who hath this care, Hieron, watcheth and broodeth over thy endeavours...» (103-108). The poet concludes by expressing the hope that he may soon be able to celebrate an even sweeter victory of Hieron's in the chariot-race.

The wish was granted not long afterwards when the tryant's chariot was first either in the Iolaia at Thebes, or in local Syracusan games. The second Pythian was written in celebration of this event,[105] and as in the first Olympian, Pindar is generous in the praise of Hieron, but not so dazzled by his wealth and power as to forget to remind him that even absolute authority has limits that cannot be transgressed: «I come from splendid Thebes, and I bring a song that telleth of the race of the four-horse chariot that shaketh the earth, — that race in which Hieron was victorious with his glorious team» (3-5). «Wealth, with wisdom allotted thereto, is the best gift of Fortune; and thou clearly hast this boon, so that thou canst show it forth with freedom of soul» (56-57). «Become what thou hast learned that thou art» (72).[106] «One must not strive against God, who at one time exalteth the power of these, and at another granteth high honour to others» (88-89).

Theron, tyrant of Acragas, was also a winner in the chariot-race at Olympia in 476. Like the triumphal odes for Hieron, the second Olympian for

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[104] Cf. Snell, p. 66.

[105] Sandys, p. 171, assigns 475 (?) B.C. as the date of the ode; Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 413, gives 468 (?).

[106] Following Slater, s.v. μανθάνω.

Theron is intensely eulogistic, but the very act of praise seems spontaneously to call forth in Pindar the powerful Hellenistic instinct for moderation and restraint in the expression of joy, and an abiding sense of the vicissitudes that beset every mortal life: «Theron must be proclaimed by reason of his victorious chariot with its four horses, Theron... who is the bulwark of Acragas, the choicest flower of an auspicious line of sires» (5-7). «But diverse are the currents that at divers times come upon men, either with joys or with toils. Even thus Fate, which handeth a kindly fortune down from sire to son, bringeth at another time some sad reverse together with the heaven-sent bliss» (33-37). «I declare that for these hundred years no city hath given birth to a man more munificent in heart, more ungrudging in hand than Theron» (92-95). «As sand can never be numbered, who could ever count up all the joys that he hath given to others?» (98-100).

These passages, entirely characteristic of Pindar's manner of addressing individuals who occupied the pinnacles of Hellenic society, fully realize the objective of the triumphal ode, which was encomiastic in its very nature, but they do so with no sacrifice of personal dignity. Pindar, a scion of the Theban aristocracy, was, quite apart from the accident of birth, of an inherently aristocratic temperament, desirous, to be sure, of pleasing those who had commissioned a poem, but incapable of an obsequious word or gesture. To Hieron and Theron, to Arcesilas, king of Cyrene, to Xenophon, wealthy member of an illustrious family of Corinth, Pindar spoke as an equal to equals.

In his relations with princes Ronsard was sometimes able to find this point of balance between a seemly and indeed indispensable eulogy, on the one hand, and on the other, a flattery that too readily declined into adulation of questionable sincerity. The Pindaric ode to Henri II that Ronsard placed at the head of his first major publication, the four books of odes of 1550, begins with a strophe and antistrophe of irreproachable courtliness (I, 61-62). The decline that begins in the first epode is a descent into apotheosis, if one may be forgiven a paradox whose apparent incongruity is redeemed by its strict accuracy. «Shall not our arrows of praise», Ronsard asks, «be directed at our king whose divine ear will imbibe this marvel which is obedient only to my law? The ancients began and ended their songs with the name of Jupiter,

> Mais Henri sera le Dieu
> Qui commencera mon mettre,
> Et que j'ai voué de mettre
> A la fin & au meilieu,
>
> (I, 63)

Above reproach, also, in its attitude toward royalty and toward Henri II,

is the superb prelude of the *Ode de la Paix*, whose substance and tonality Pindar would not have disavowed, for he had contributed so much to both. With the seventh verse begins an example of the most sustained imitation of the Theban poet to be found in Ronsard's Pindaric odes:

STROPHE I

Toute roiauté qui dedaigne
L'humble vertu pour sa compaigne
Souvent dresse le front trop haut:
Et de son heur outrecuidée
Court vague,[107] sans estre guidée
De la clarté qui lui defaut.
O Roi par destin ordonné
Pour commander seul à la France,
Certénement Dieu t'a donné
Ce double honneur des ton enfance.
Lequel (apres la longue horreur
De Mars vomissant sa fureur,
Et l'âpre venin de sa rage
Sur ton païs noirci d'orage)
Par l'effort d'un bras souverain,
A fait ravaller la tempeste,
Et ardre alentour de ta teste
Un air plus tranquille & serain.

ANTISTROPHE

Tousjours le sage se travaille
Doubler les dons que Dieu lui baille,
Et les vertus qu'il a des Cieus:
Ta majesté de méme sorte
S'etudie affin qu'elle porte
Les siennes au haut de leur mieus.
Aussi mainte felicité
Toi, Roi des peuples, environne,
Toi seigneur de mainte cité
Qui se courbe sous ta couronne.
Des long tens tu fus honoré
Comme seul prince decoré
Des biens & des vertus ensemble
Que le destin en un t'assemble:
Mais ce bien qu'ores tu nous fais
Veut qu'on t'adore d'avantage,
Pour avoir fait reverdir l'age,
Où florissoit l'antique paix.

(III, 3-5)

For this exordium Ronsard did not go to the passage in which Pindar had paid his richest tribute to the goddess of Peace.[108] Peace was a secondary consideration to Ronsard in the writing of the *Ode de la Paix*. The first, as we

[107] Errant. Huguet.

[108] Pyth., VIII, 1-12.

know, was to persuade Henri II that in all of France there was no one who could more fittingly than Ronsard occupy the position of Court poet, no one who could demonstrate this more convincingly by writing the national epic, the *Franciade*. Considering for the moment only the end that Ronsard had in view, one must admire the adroitness with which he chose his passage in the prelude of the fifth Pythian ode to Arcesilas of Cyrene:

«O blest of Heaven! Arcesilas! From the first steps of thy famous life thou dost indeed seek for that wealth, and fair fame withal, by the help of Castor of the golden chariot,[109] who, after the wintry storm, sheddeth beams of calm upon thy happy hearth.

«They that are noble bear with a fairer grace even the power that is given of God; and thou, while thou walkest in the straight path, hast prosperity in abundance around thee. First, as thou art a king over mighty cities, the eye of thy ancestry looketh on this as a meed most fit for reverence, when wedded to a soul like thine...» (5-19).[110]

If the end that Ronsard had in view in writing the *Ode de la Paix* was to put Henri II in a frame of mind receptive to his request for royal favor, then it was intelligent to begin with an imitation of the overture to Pindar's hymn to Arcesilas. The poetic result, so far as the prelude of Ronsard's ode was concerned, was excellent. It possesses dignity and elevation, and a very happy imagery. Yet there is still a word to be said as between the relative merits of the original and the imitation. Whoever will read both passages with an ear to their precise spiritual inclination, will see that Pindar had the more profound conception both of kingship and divinity. For while Ronsard seems to be assuring Henri II that he rules by divine right, Pindar is gently reminding Arcesilas that he rules by divine sufferance. Yet it is only just to say that the final verses of the *Ode de la Paix*, which appear to have been suggested by the end of the first Olympian, reveal a nearer approach to Pindar's conception of the relation between king and god:

> Dieu vueille continuer
> Le sommet de ton empire,
> Et en rien ne le muer
> Echangeant le mieus au pire...
> (III, 34)

In one of the Hieronic odes Pindar praises the lord of Syracuse for his military victories: «I shall ascend a prow that is crowned with flowers, while

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[109] «Castor gaudet equis», Horace, *Satires*, II, i, 26. «Kastor represents both commerce and chariots.» Gildersleeve, p. 307.

[110] See *POR*, pp. 82-85, for an analysis of the similarities between the Greek and French texts.

I sound the praise of valour. Youth findeth its strength in courage amid dread wars; and thence do I declare that thou also hast won thy boundless fame by fighting, not only among warrior horsemen, but also among men on foot; and thy counsels, riper than thy years, prompt me to say what cannot be challenged, even to praise thee with the fullest praise» (Pyth., II, 62-67).

Ronsard developed the ninth strophe of the *Ode de la Paix* on the basis of the preceding passage of the second Pythian:

STROPHE 9

Plus tost que les feus ne s'elancent
Quand au ciel les foudres nous tancent
Je courrai dire aus estrangers,
Combien l'effort de ta main destre
Maniant le fer, est adestre
A briser l'horreur des dangers,
Et de quel soin prudent & caut
Ton peuple justement tu guides,
Apris au mestier comme il faut
Lui lacher & serrer les brides.
Ta vieille jeunesse, & tes ans
En mille vertus reluisans,
M'inspirent une vois hardie,
Et me commandent que je die
Ce regne heureus & fortuné...
(III, 29-30)

Read without reference to the context in which they occur, these verses must strike every equitable mind as beyond serious criticism. Unfortunately, they constitute the sequel of an explicit stipulation expressed in the immediately preceding lines:

C'est à toi Roi, d'honorer
Les vers, & les decorer
Des presens de ta hautesse,
Pousse ma nef, je serai
Des premiers qui passerai
Mes compagnons de vitesse.
(III, 29)

VI. The Prelude of the First Olympian Ode and a Prefiguration of Le Roi Soleil

Ronsard concludes the *Ode de la Paix* for Henri II by delcaring that the empty reaches of the universe are full of the everlasting glory of the reigning

king's father François Ier, the enlightened monarch who had written, loved, and encouraged poetry.[111]

Properly understood in the light of Ronsard's diligent attention during this period to the odes of Pindar, the verses in which Ronsard celebrated the departed ruler seem to have been derived from the first Olympian, which, if the supposition were shown to be well-founded, would appear to be one of the remotest sources in time of the concept of Le Roi Soleil that attained such prominence in the century of Louis XIV.

The prelude of the first Olympian seeks to establish the festival at Olympia as incomparably the most outstanding of all the Great Games: «Look not by day», Pindar tells Hieron, «for any star in the *lonely sky* that shineth with warmth more genial than the sun [μηχέθ' ἁλίου σκόπει / ἄλλο θαλπνότερον ἐν ἁμέρᾳ φαεννὸν ἄστρον ἐρήμας δι' αἰθέρος], nor let us think to praise a place of festival more glorious than Olympia». The poet thus offers the tyrant of Syracuse, winner in the horse-race at Olympia, a dazzling solar image of his victory in the most notable of the Games.

Ronsard's intention as he concluded the *Ode de la Paix*, analogous to Pindar's motive, was to place before Henri II, as a model to be followed, the most luminous example of a ruler, his father François Ier, who had shown so unusually sensitive an appreciation of the literary arts that he had come to be known as «le père des lettres».

> Mais le vuide de l'univers
> Est plein de la gloire eternelle
> Qui fait flamber ton pere en elle
> Pour avoir tant aimé les vers.
> (III, 34)

The expression *vuide de l'univers*, the celestial region in which the eternal glory of François Ier flamed, bears a strong resemblance to the phrase ἐρήμας αἰθέρος in the prelude (6) of the first Olympian, an ode which Ronsard had studied more thoroughly than any other, with the possible exception of Pythian I. In his *Lexicon to Pindar* Slater defines ἐρήμας αἰθέρος as *barren* or *deserted heaven*.[112] Sandys translated them as *lonely sky*, Ronsard as *vuide de l'univers*, and the poet's contemporary, Henri Estienne, many years after

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[111] See Pierre Villey, *Marot et Rabelais* (1923), p. 13. — The interested reader will find additional material on Ronsard's courtly eulogies, mingled with Pindaric admonitions and occasional utterly un-Pindaric censure, of those who reigned after Henri II, in my article on «Pierre de Ronsard: Panegyrist, Pensioner, and Satirist of the French Court», *RR*, XLV (1954), 89-108. The present section, to some extent, supplements what is presented there. — See also Raymond Lebègue, «Ronsard poète officiel», *Studi in onore di Vittorio Lugli e Diego Valeri* (Venice, 1961), II, 573-587; Marcel Françon, «Ronsard panégyriste de la cour», *Convivium* 5, N.S. (Sept.-Oct., 1954), 556-564.

[112] This interpretation was also favored by Farnell, Puech, and Lattimore.

the publication of the *Ode de la Paix*, as *vacuum aetherem*.[113] In more recent times Myers' version was *void firmament* (p. 3), Finley's *vacant sky* (p. 52).

There is an obvious family likeness, if one could discover its genesis, among all of these interpretations, and it is strikingly evident that no accident, operating across the centuries to such identical effect, could have determined Ronsard's choice of *vuide*[114] for ἐρήμας, nor Myers' *void*,[115] nor Finley's *vacant*, nor Estienne's *vacuum*. What is the basis in significance of this near unanimity of independent translations?

Gildersleeve's paraphrase of the prelude of Olympian I yields the secret of this gleaming solar mystery: «No better element than water», he writes (p. 128), «no brighter blaze than fire by night, no form of wealth that outdazzles gold, no light of heaven so luminous, so warming, as the sun, which *dims the ether into voidness*, no contest more noble than the Olympian...» (my emphasis). The sun dims the ether, the heaven, into voidness, *because its brilliance obliterates the light of all other stars*. Inadvertently Gildersleeve has demonstrated the solidity of Ronsard's interpretation of Pindar not only in this passage of the *Ode de la Paix*, but even more cogently in Ronsard's own paraphrase of the overture of the first Olympian:

> Car tout ainsi que la mer [*sc.* eau] passe
> L'honneur d'un chaq'un élément,
> Et le souleil semblablement
> *Les moindres feus du ciel éface...*
> (I, 117)

Thus, if the preceding observations are tenable, François I^er^, whose radiance flames in eternal glory throughout the *vuide de l'univers*, extinguishes the light of all other stars (i.e., princes) in the firmament of royalty. He is a prefiguration of Le Roi Soleil.

Once the concept had formed in Ronsard's mind, its avatars, generally not descended directly from the prelude of the first Olympian, were certain to be as numerous as the royal masters he was destined to serve. Since Henri II's emblem was a crescent, the poet writes, «Pour [*sc.* au lieu de] un Croissant il te fault un Soleil» (IX, 194). In view of the fact that Diane de Poitiers, Henri II's mistress, represents the moon by virtue of her mythological name, Ronsard is led to say to her, «Ainsi nostre Soleil, vous ornant de ses

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[113] Estienne's first edition of Pindar and the Greek lyric poets was published in 1560. I refer to the second edition of 1566: *Pindari Olympia, Pythia, Nemea, Isthmia...* Editio II. Graecolatina..., p. 9.

[114] One of the definitions given by A. Bailly, *Dictionnaire grec-français*, 1895.

[115] One of the definitions in LSJ.

rais...» (X, 70). After the king's death the following eulogy appears in the *Bergerie*, composed in March or April 1564:

> Ainsi qu'un beau Soleil entre les belles ames
> Environné d'esclairs, de rayons, & de flames,
> Tu reluis dans le Ciel, & loing de toute peur
> Fait Ange tu te ris de ce monde trompeur.
> (XIII, 99-100)

A month later, for the *Mascarades de Bar-le-Duc*, Ronsard wrote a debate between the elements and the planets in honor of Charles IX. The four elements, led by Earth, list the gifts with which they have endowed the young king. The Sun makes this reply:

> Ce n'est pas toy, Terre, qui ce grand Roy
> As tant remply de puissance, c'est moy
> De qui l'aspect aux Rois donne la vie,
> Et peut leur Sceptre en gloire meintenir...
> (XIII, 223-224; cf. 269, vv. 45-46)

In the *Comparaison du Soleil & du Roy faitte par stances, qui fut recitée par deux joueurs de Lyre, lesquels estoient assis dedans un chariot devant sa Majesté*, Ronsard appears to have made an attempt, as the title itself suggests, to reproduce, however remotely and artificially, something of the atmosphere of the choral odes of Pindar. The players of the lyre respond to each other antiphonally:

> I
> Le Soleil & notre Roy
> Sont semblables de puissance,
> L'un gouverne desous soy
> Le Ciel, & l'autre la France.
> II
> L'un du Ciel tient le millieu,
> Des astres clarté premiere,
> Et l'autre comme un grand Dieu
> Aux terres donne lumiere...
> I
> Bref le Soleil esclairant
> Par tout, qui point ne repose,
> De Charles n'est different
> Seulement que d'une chose:
> II
> C'est que le Soleil mourra
> Apres quelque temps d'espace,
> Et Charles au Ciel ira
> Du Soleil prendre la place.
> (XV, 349, 351)

In the immediately following *Cartel pour le Roy habillé en forme de*

Soleil... this prophecy is fulfilled, and Charles IX, in verses no less frigid than the preceding ones, himself declares:

> Par haut desir au Ciel je suis monté,
> Où du Soleil j'ay l'habit emprunté
> Afin de faire aux Estoilles celestes
> Comme en tous lieux mes vertus manifestes.
> (XV, 352-353)

Ronsard's hyperbolical prediction did not prevent Charles IX's death, but even before that event the solar imagery in which the poet had clothed him began to be shared by his brother Henri d'Anjou, the newly chosen King of Poland:

> C'est moy[116] qui n'a gueres fit naistre
> Ce grand HENRY [II], qui fut mon maistre,
> Monarque aux armes non pareil,
> Et son fils HENRY qui l'egale
> En force, en vertu martiale,
> Des François le second soleil.
> (XVII, 416)

After the death of Charles IX in 1574 Henri III ceased to be «le second soleil». In the *Estreines* that Ronsard addressed to the new monarch of France at the end of that year, Henri blazes in the skies of Europe with an incandescence matching that of François Ier at the end of the *Ode de la Paix*:

> A vous race de Rois, Prince de tant de Princes,
> Qui tenez dessous vous deux si grandes Provinces,
> Qui par toute l'Europe esclairez tout ainsi
> Qu'un beau Soleil d'Esté de flames esclarci...
> (XVII, 85)

But to those who are aware of the nature of the relationship between Ronsard and his new master, the irony of any comparison with François Ier could not be more intense. It emerges with painful force at the end of the *Discours ou Dialogue entre les Muses deslogées & Ronsard* which appeared in 1584 in the *Bocage Royal*. In the reign of Henri III the Muses of Ronsard had fallen on ruinous times and beg the poet to intercede for them with the king. But Ronsard, who had placed François Ier as the sole luminary in an Olympian *vuide de l'univers*, outshining and obliterating all others stars as only an authentic «Prince de tant de Princes» could do, is compelled by his perception of the indifference, not to say the haughty hostility of Henri III, to deny the request of the impoverished college of the Muses:

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[116] These words are spoken by «la Nymphe de France» in honor of Henri d'Anjou's election to the Polish throne and before his accession to the throne of France.

Je n'oze l'aborder, je crains sa Majesté,
Tant je suis esblouy des raiz de sa clairté...
(XVIII, 95)

Rays of darkness Ronsard must rather have felt them to be, to write in a manner so much in conflict with his own poetic ideals. But in the following edition published in 1587 not long after his death, Ronsard had to some degree overcome his fear of the king. The verses that he then added to the *Dialogue des Muses* were a reaffirmation of his devotion to these divinities of poetry and a renewal of his faith that Le Roi Soleil might still recognize his inherited obligation as a «pere des lettres»:

Prince qui nous servez de phare & de flambeau,
Ne laissez point errer sans logis ce troupeau...
(*Loc. cit.*, var.)

VII. «Honorer les dieux... le premier commandement du Décalogue pindarique»

The Great Games were held in honor of the gods, and especially of Zeus. In the fifth Nemean (25), the Muses themselves, celebrating in song the marriage of Thetis and Peleus, begin with a prelude to Zeus, their father.[117] The poets who composed the triumphal odes must have been deeply aware that as instruments of the Muses, of Apollo, above all of Zeus, they were fulfilling a profoundly religious function in glorifying the victors in the Games. This awareness may have varied to a degree from poet to poet, depending on the governing tendencies of his personality, but all must have been conscious, as were the participants in the Games and the spectators, of the religious atmosphere in which these events took place.

Perhaps more than most, Pindar sensed and responded to this aspect of the athletic festivals. «L'orientation de la pensée de Pindare lui est propre, et nous savons, assurément, combien la profondeur de son sentiment religieux se distingue des préoccupations plus purement esthétiques et plus superficielles d'un Bacchylide. Mais il n'était pas en son pouvoir de s'exprimer dans un sens qui eût détonné avec la nature même des exploits qu'il chantait et des cérémonies auxquelles il participait... Cela nous invite à réfléchir au rapport unissant le poème triomphal au triomphe de l'athlète et à la nature même de ce triomphe... L'ἀγών athlétique... est assurément issu d'un rite primitif. Le poème qui le célèbre... lui est forcément lié de façon très étroite. Ce n'est

[117] Cf. above, sec. iii of the present chapter.

pas une sorte de commentaire surajouté; il fait partie du même ensemble religieux et culturel.»[118]

Pindar's poetic autonomy was in no way diminished by the fact that his odes were so closely associated with the religious character of the Games. In the preceding observations Jacqueline Duchemin quite properly insists that «L'orientation de la pensée de Pindare lui est propre». The Games strengthened in him an already powerful innate tendency toward transcendence, toward participation in the divine. «Pindar treats [poetry] as in some sense a more than human activity... in breaking the bounds of time and place and exalting human life to a special abundance and felicity. In this he seems to see himself as moving in a special order of being between gods and men, between heaven and earth, and in it men win something of the glory and the strength that are the prerogative of the gods. Such a view is quite consistent with his belief that song comes from the Muse and is therefore a celestial activity. When it fills his being, it lifts him above the common restrictions of mortality and enables him to move not among mere abstractions but among realities which are not visible to the physical eye and are for that reason all the more real.»[119]

Though unrelated to the Hellenic tradition of invoking the name of Zeus in the prelude of a poem, an example of what Farnell (II, 277) called «the formal law ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα,» «With Zeus let us begin», may perhaps be found in the advice that Chiron, the divine Centaur, gave to the young Achilles: «First of all the gods to adore the son of Cronus, the loud-voiced lord of the lightnings and the thunders» (Pyth., VI, 23-25). «Honorer les dieux», Croiset says (p. 232), «est le premier commandement, pour ainsi dire, du Décalogue pindarique».

Reverence for the gods — Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, — was for Pindar the most essential element in the spiritual substance of the festivals. «Whether it be fleetness of foot or swiftness of horse... the glory is, after all, not the winner's, but the god's.»[120] At the end of a long life which had witnessed the most tremendous vicissitudes in Hellenic experience, including the burning of Athens by the Persian invaders and the destruction of the Persian fleet at Salamis, Pindar must have been thinking far beyond the triumph of Aristomenes at Delphi in 446, when he wrote in the eighth Pythian: «Victory doth not depend on men alone; but he that giveth is God [δαίμων], who, at one

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[118] Duchemin, pp. 315-316; cf. p. 335. See also James W. Johnson's article on «Lyric» in *EPP*, p. 462, col. 2 and 463, col. 2.

[119] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 38-39; cf. pp. 22, 24 and 42: «The gods appear in every one of his extant poems.» — See also Gildersleeve, p. xxix: «Nearly every ode is full of gods.» Croiset, p. 244: «Pindare y songe sans cesse. Son imagination a naturellement le ton religieux.»

[120] Gildersleeve, p. xxiii; cf. Croiset, p. 113.

while, exalteth on high, and, at another, bringeth one below the level of his hands» (76-78).

For Pindar Zeus is the foremost of the gods and the most powerful. He is τέλειος, who brings all things to fulfillment.[121] «It is the mighty mind of Zeus», he says in the fifth Pythian, «that guideth the fate of men that he loveth» (122-123). Apollo, to be sure, is the god of music and the lyre, he is the son and the Word of Zeus, as the Muses are his daughters, but it is Zeus who is the ultimate source of the poet's inspired song. It is only by the grace of Zeus that the warriors of Aegina have given a new theme to poets (Isth., V, 28-29). Pindar prays to Zeus to «grant honour to the hymn ordained in praise of an Olympian victor» (Ol., VII, 87-88). In the first Pythian, as Finley notes (p. 83), «Zeus... becomes wholly identified with harmony», for «all things that Zeus detests flee over land and the restless sea at the sound of the Pierides' singing» (13-14).

VIII. The Emergence of θεός

Croiset has studied with great sensitivity (pp. 178-190) the evolution that took place between the Homeric and Pindaric concepts of the divine. The poet of Thebes, he says, has retained the traditional external framework of the epic — the names and the principal actions of the gods — but has completely transformed the spiritual substance of the Homeric narratives. In the epic the divine beings are still intimately identified with the material phenomena that they represent: Iris with the shooting star, Thetis with the vapors rising from the sea; Pindar, on the other hand, deifies abstractions like Fortune, Peace, Harmony. The movements of the gods, in spite of their incredible velocity, are in Homer still local motion; but the instantaneity of the rescue of the infant Asclepius, snatched by his father Apollo from the burning body of Coronis, is in Pindar (Pyth., III, 43-44) a metaphor for «la vitesse incalculable de la pensée divine» (p. 180). «Aussi l'image de la divinité particulière s'anéantit dans l'idée générale de Dieu, et Pindare écrit, d'un style déjà tout philosophique, des vers où les images sensibles elles-mêmes ne sont plus qu'un voile transparent derrière lequel apparaît la plus sévère notion de la nature divine» (p. 189).

The process described here by Croiset is discernible in Pindar's accounts of the actions and nature of the gods of the pantheon. But the poet's thought, from the time of the composition of the first of his triumphal odes, the tenth Pythian in 490 B.C., was already emancipating itself from the

[121] Ol., XIII, 115; Pyth., I, 67.

divine personalities who inhabited Olympus. Of these the name of Zeus is invoked far more frequently in his verses than that of any other divinity, but it is a remarkable fact that contrary to what we find in Homer, the word θεός, god, occurs as frequently as the name of the Sky-god in the odes of Pindar, «pour exprimer l'essence de la nature divine en dehors de toute détermination de personne» (p. 189).

With regard to his own discipline, for example, which is so markedly dominated by the praise of the gods, Pindar is aware that «God [θεός] who doeth all things for mortals, even maketh grace to grow for song» (frag. 141, p. 601), and that in this respect the impersonal θεός is indissociable from the Zeus of the first Pythian. In that great ode to the moral and spiritual supremacy of μουσική Pindar discovers in the gods the gift, not only of poetry, song, music, and the dance, but of every discipline: «From the gods [ἐκ θεῶν] come all the means of mortal exploits» (41). «Each ungodded [ἄνευ θεοῦ] thing», as Gildersleeve (p. 102) translates verses 103-104 of the ninth Olympian, «— each thing wherein God hath no part — is none the worse for remaining quenched in silence». «Dans un fragment... cité par Clément d'Alexandrie», says Croiset (p. 189), a fragment which resonates like a cosmic echo of the questions concerning man's destiny at the end of the eighth Pythian, «Pindare se demande ce que c'est que Dieu: 'Qu'est-ce que Dieu? que n'est-il pas? [Τί θεός; τί δ' οὔ;].' Et il répond... avec une concision profonde et énergique: 'Dieu, c'est le Tout [τὸ πᾶν].'»[122]

In the «Excursus on Pindar's Religion» which brings to a close Farnell's *Critical Commentary to the Works of Pindar* (II, 466), the culmination of the poet's motion toward an understanding of a common essence shared by the gods of the pantheon is stated in these words: «Yet [Pindar] can transcend the pluralism of this system and discern a higher unity and a deeper significance in the concept of θεός, the all-pervading divine power that sums up all these several entities, a word that stands for the highest reality in the Kosmos.»

Thus there is nothing paradoxical in the assertion that Pindar's attitude toward the divinities of the pantheon, and perhaps most of all, his depersonalization of them by the frequent use of θεός and δαίμων, represent a more deeply religious spirit than that which prevailed in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. «La vérité est qu'il n'y eut jamais poème moins religieux que l'*Iliade*», says Paul Mazon in his discussion of the gods of Homer's first epic.[123] Gilbert Murray denies that the pantheon, as Homer presents it to us, ever claimed

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[122] The Greek fragment is quoted in Croiset, p. 190, n. 1, from Clement's *Stromateis*, V, 726.

[123] *Introduction à l'Iliade*, p. 294.

the religious loyalties of the early Greeks: «The Homeric religion ... was not really religion at all. The beautiful Olympians whom we find in Homer... do not represent the Gods worshipped by any particular part of early Greece. They represent an enlightened compromise made to suit the conveniences of a federation.»[124]

IX. «Chante moy ces odes... les louanges des dieux»

During the Renaissance the gods of the Homeric and Pindaric pantheon achieved a genuine, if partial and exclusively literary, rebirth. Regardless of what may have been said about the non-religious character of the gods of Homer, the first and final impression that they leave with the readers of yesterday and today, in spite of their anthropomorphic foibles, is one of grandeur and nobility commensurate with the universe that they filled and governed.

These were the gods whose praise Joachim du Bellay, in a passage of the *Deffence* known to every student of French Renaissance literature, urged upon the writers of lyric poetry: «Chante moy ces odes, incongnues encor' de la Muse francoyse, d'un luc bien accordé au son de la lyre greque et romaine: et qu'il n'y ait vers, ou n'aparoisse quelque vestige de rare et antique erudition. Et quand à ce, te fourniront de matière les louanges des dieux et des hommes vertueux.»[125]

Ronsard, who had for some years been studying and imitating the odes of Pindar, was surely familiar with the thought of this passage long before the *Deffence* was published in the Spring of 1549. In the *Bacchanales* composed in the summer of that year he describes his intense pleasure upon hearing Jean Dorat performing Pindaric and Horatian odes to the accompaniment of the lyre (III, 214-215), among them,

> Une chanson si parfaicte
> Qui n'est faite
> Que pour les Dieux esjouir.
> (III, 216)

In a playful *Odelette* (inc. *Escoute, du Bellay*) that appeared in the *Bocage* of 1554, Ronsard tells his friend that the attractions of erotic poetry impede the praises he would address to men and the gods (VI, 112-113). But this is the exception that proves the rule: ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα, «With Zeus let us begin». In 1565, at the beginning of his *Art poëtique* (XIV, 6), Ronsard will quote it

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[124] *The Rise of the Greek Epic* (London, 1934⁴), p. 265.

[125] *Def.*, pp. 208-210 [112-113].

in Greek, in exactly this form, from the prelude of Theocritus' *Panegyric of Ptolemy*, and he may also have encountered a statement of the principle in Plato's *Timaeus* (27 C). The *Hymne du treschrestien Roy de France Henry II. de ce nom* (1555), had begun with a clear affirmation of this formal law:

> Muses, quand nous voudrons les loüenges chanter
> Des Dieux, il nous faudra au nom de Jupiter
> Commencer, & finir, comme un Dieu qui la bande
> Des autres Dieux gouverne, & maistre leur commande:
> Mais quand il nous plaira chanter l'honneur des Roys,
> Il faudra par HENRY, le grand Roy des François,
> Commencer, & finir, comme au Roy qui surpasse
> En grandeur tous les Roys de cette terre basse.
> (VIII, 5-6)

Throughout the years Ronsard repeatedly invokes the same principle: in 1559, in the hymn to Charles Cardinal de Lorraine (IX, 35-36); in 1569, in the elegy to Simon Nicolas (XV, 261); in the preface *Au Lecteur* of the *Odes* in the first posthumous edition of 1587, when he quotes three verses (83-85) of Horace's *Ars Poetica* beginning «Musa dedit fidibus Divos...» (I, 59); and in the last preface of the *Franciade* (XVI, 345).[126] In the obsequious atmosphere of the French Court, which the poets delighted to perceive as a sort of pantheon, the frequent *rapprochement* of men in high station, especially those of royal blood, with Jupiter, inevitably suggested honorific, yet invidious, comparison between a presently all-powerful ruler and a once-powerful, but now largely decorative divinity, reduced in circumstances, but still impressive in the hands of a skillful poet or artist.

X. The Eviction of Jupiter: The Ambivalent Divinity of Ronsard's Absolutist Masters

In the case of Ronsard, this process of comparison prejudicial to Jupiter began almost at once. From his earliest Pindaric ode to Henri II (1547 or 1548), the distinction between Jupiter and the king begins to be blurred. Henri, in fact, evicts Jupiter from his privileged position at the beginning of a poem: «HENRI sera le Dieu Qui commencera mon mettre» (I, 63), and goes even further in 1555 when he dislodges the Sky-god from his paramount place at the head of the pantheon (VIII, 27 vv. 423-496). In the *Avantentrée du Roi treschrestien à Paris* (1549), the city is invited to behold and adore the king,

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[126] The God of Christianity is invoked in the same spirit in *Hercule Chrestien*; see above, n. 103 of the present chapter.

Ton nouveau Dieu, dont la divinité
T'enrichira d'une immortalité.
(I, 18, vv. 27-28; cf. vv. 73-78)

It would be tedious to multiply the number of passages in which Ronsard assimilates each of the kings who reigned during his life, sometimes even before their accession to power, with the god of Olympus or with the scions of the race of the gods.[127] Against this permanent and apparently irresistible flow of the praise of royalty merging into divinity, there was an occasional countercurrent, rising more frequently in the verses of Horace than in those of Pindar:

Toutes choses mondaines
Qui vestent nerfs, & venes,
Egalle mort attend,
Soient povres, ou soient Princes,
Car sur toutes provinces
Sa main large s'estend.
(II, 108; cf. VII, 58)

Early in 1559, either during or shortly after the conclusion of the negotiation of the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis between France and Spain, Ronsard, as «poète du Roi», urged Henri II to accept its terms, though they were unfavorable to France:

Que souhaitez vous plus? la Fortune est muable,
Vous avez fait de vous meinte preuve honorable.
Il suffist, il suffist, il est temps desormais
Fouller la guerre aux pieds, & n'en parler jamais.
Pensez vous estre Dieu, l'honneur du monde passe,
Il faut un jour mourir quelque chose qu'on face,
Et apres vostre mort, fussiez vous Empereur,
Vous ne serez non plus qu'un simple laboureur.
(IX, 114; cf. p. 141)

In all of these passages, those that elevate the king to the role of Jupiter, as well as those that abase him to the level of the peasant, there is an ambivalence that goes beyond this obvious contrast of royal destinies. The equation of royalty with divinity is, of course, not intended to be taken in literal earnest. «De mesme peau que nous vostre corps est vestu», Ronsard will tell Henri III (XVII, 30, v. 234), whom he nevertheless unmercifully flattered. But the multiplicity of poems in which Ronsard deifies the kings of France is not an inconsequential phenomenon. Though he sometimes denied that he had the power to grant apotheosis, as when he said to the same Henri III:

[127] See, for example, VI, 57; VII, 53, 67, 69; VIII, 26; XIII, 100; XVII, 10, 55; XVIII, 4.

La terre est presque vostre, et dans le ciel vous mettre
Je ne suis pas un Dieu: je ne puis le promettre...
(XVII, 185, vv. 9-10)

he peopled the heavens with kings whom he had raised to the rank of deities. «Quoi qu'il en ait dit», says the note on these verses, «Ronsard, comme la majorité des poètes de son époque, accordait l'apothéose successivement à tous les souverains français... Et à l'avènement de Henri III, après la mort prématurée de Charles IX, il avait dit:

Un Dieu doit heriter à l'empire d'un Dieu.»
(XVII, 10, v. 172)

The affinity of kings with Zeus, the derivation of royal power from Zeus, may be traced to the origins of Greek literature.[128] But it was not until the Alexandrian age that divine honors were granted to mortals. The apotheosis of monarchs was not known in the Archaic period in which Pindar lived and wrote.[129] Ronsard, on the other hand, drew no line of demarcation between the divine right of kings as rulers of the state,[130] and their divinization:

... car sçauroit-on rien voir
Au monde, qui ne soit plié sous le pouvoir
De Roys, enfans du Ciel, qui leurs sceptres estandent
De l'une à l'autre Mer, & apres DIEU commandent?
Jupiter est leur Pere...
(VIII, 25)

Commenting on the terrestrial Olympus created at the Court of Henri II by the poets and artists of the sixteenth century, Henri Weber (p. 88) correctly observes that «La mythologie alimente donc ce goût des travestissements, venu d'Italie... Elle souligne par ailleurs en divinisant le roi et sa famille, l'évolution du pouvoir royal vers l'absolutisme».

Ronsard's acquiescence in the absolutist tendencies of royalty is discernible in his implicit theory of lyric praise as this emerges in his poetry. He had established that theory on the basis of Greek lyric practice, but in the absence of an authoritative precedent from that source for deifying the kings under whom he served, he created his own theory in which apotheosis became both the symbol and the supreme sanction of absolutist reign.

In the *Elegie au Seigneur l'Huillier* (1560) he writes:

... la Muse jamais en un cœur ne se prit
Si ardant que le mien, pour celebrer les gestes
De noz Rois, que j'ay mis au nombre des Celestes...
(X, 295-296; cf. XIV, 142)

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[128] *Iliad*, II, 197, 205; *Homeric Hymn*, XXV, 4; *Theogony*, 96.

[129] C.F. Edson, Jr., «Ruler-Cult. I. Greek», *OCD*, pp. 782-783.

[130] See the numerous references in my *Three Ronsard Studies*, p. 91, n. 119.

The *Compleinte à la Royne mere du Roy* (1564) tells how Apollo and the Muses taught Ronsard that it was part of the lyric poet's function to sing the praises of kings and persons of royal blood, and how he employed his talent to glorify Henri II and to deify the Medici ancestors of the queen's family:

A la fin Apollon & ses sœurs volontiers
En l'Antre Thespien m'aprindrent leurs mestiers,
A bien faire des vers, à bien poulcer la Lyre,
A scavoir fredonner, à scavoir dessus dire
Les louanges des Roys, & en mille façons
A scavoir alyer les cordes aux chansons...
Lors je ne m'ataquay aux plus basses personnes,
Mais hardy je me pris aux Roys porte-couronnes...
Je celebray Henry & ses œuvres guerrieres...
Apres je celebray en mille chans divers
La Royne son espouse, honneur de l'univers...
Je chantay la grandeur de ses nobles ayeux,[131]
Et de terre eslevés je les mis dans les cieux.
(XII, 176-177)

When Poland elected as her king Henri d'Anjou, soon to become Henri III of France, Ronsard's congratulations in *La Nymphe de France parle* (1573) took the form of the ultimate in apotheosis:

Si le Ciel n'avoit point de Prince,
Le Ciel mesme l'eust bien voulu.
(XVII, 417)

Toward the end of his life, in the *Caprice au Seigneur Simon Nicolas*, Ronsard urges the future great poet who may arise in France (vv. 85-100), to choose royalty as his subject for lyric praise:

Que le beau nom des Princes & des Rois
Soit son subject & le porte-carquois:
Par ce chemin, loin des tourbes menues,
A branle d'aile on vole outre les nues,
Se couronnant à la postérité,
Des Rameaux saincts de l'immortalité.
(XVIII, 321)

The advice that Ronsard thus leaves in 1584, almost as a testament to the poets who are to succeed him, on a matter that had determined the nature of so much of his own writing, is the counsel he had himself received from the odes of Pindar almost forty years earlier. From his beginnings the archer had been for Ronsard, as it had for Pindar,[132] the symbol of the poet, the spokesman on earth of Apollo ἑκάεργος, «the far-shooter», and the quiver and

[131] In the Pindaric ode *A la Roine*, I, 67, vv. 37-49.

[132] Ol., I, 112; II, 83-86; IX, 5-8; Pyth., I, 12; Nem., VI, 27-29, etc.

arrows represented his store of subjects.[133] Ronsard's «renunciation» of Pindar in 1556 (VIII, 356) had indeed been far from definitive.

XI. Zeus, θεός, Jupiter, Dieu

The emergence of θεός in Pindar as a dominant religious significance represents a notable progression in the concept of the divine. «Are there any suggestions of monotheism in Pindar?» James Adam asked. «It is urged by some that his frequent use of the singular θεός, δαίμων, and so on, when speaking of the supernatural, though it does not imply a belief in one God, is at all events a step in the direction of monotheism. We may admit that such an idiom involuntarily recognises the existence of certain common attributes by which the divine is always distinguished from the human; but it in no way implies that the Godhead is numerically one... Pindar's polytheism is not less candid and sincere than that of Homer... Pindar, of course, knows nothing of the philosophical tendency to construe the inferior Gods as particular names or aspects of the one supreme Being... He clearly holds that there is but one divine purpose shaping the course of events, the purpose of Zeus.»[134]

It is not possible to dispute the validity of this interpretation. Pindar's polytheism is indeed beyond question. Nevertheless, with respect to a poet who used the words θεός and δαίμων many times when he might have said Ζεύς, it is not unreasonable to ask how involuntary was the recognition of the common attributes which distinguish the divine from the human. Surely there was an intentional intellectual and religious purpose at work in the process described by Croiset (p. 188): «L'idée de la perfection divine devait, par un dernier effort, amener naturellement l'esprit de Pindare à celle de l'unité fondamentale et essentielle de la divinité. A mesure que chacun des dieus s'élève vers l'idéal, tout ce qui n'est pas cet idéal tend à s'effacer en lui. Les divers individus de la famille olympienne se rapprochent dans une perfection commune. Les êtres sont séparés les uns des autres par leur imperfection; celle-ci venant à disparaître, les différences aussi s'évanouissent dans la plénitude de la beauté intellectuelle et morale. Il en est ainsi dans la théologie de Pindare. Quoiqu'elle soit pleine de dieux distincts, l'unité divine y éclate à toutes les pages.»

The sentiment with which Pindar turns to the worship of a divinity who is at once the expression and the unattainable destination of the highest human ideal transcends the concept of praise. Whether his prayer is addressed to

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[133] I, 73, vv. 13-24; cf. p. 55, lines 124-125; p. 62, vv. 19-28, etc.

[134] *The Religious Teachers of Greece* (Edinburgh, 1909), p. 122.

the Zeus of the first Pythian, after the destruction of elemental evil symbolized by Typhon: «Grant, grant we may find grace with thee, O Zeus»; whether his thought is directed to θεός, defined as the All and freed of every limitation, dwelling within and beyond every horizon — the sentiment is one of adoration.

XII. «Sois sainct de quelque nom que tu voudras, ô Pere»

Neither Zeus nor *theos* occurs in Ronsard's poetry. The first is of course replaced more or less adequately by Jupiter, but it may not be quite accurate to say that the second is adequately replaced by Dieu, which normally signifies the God of a monotheistic religion. Nevertheless, since *theos* had no place in Ronsard's poems, we sometimes find Dieu supplanting it in Pindaric contexts. In the ode *Au Roi* which in 1550 opens the second book of odes, we read:

> De la chose non tissue
> L'heureuse fin, & l'issue
> Se cache en la main de Dieu.
> (I, 173)

If Laumonier's note correctly conjectured that a possible source of the passage was the twelfth Olympian: «A sure token of what shall come to pass hath never any man on the earth received from God [θεόθεν]» (7-8, trans. Myers), we have here an example of a latent and imprecise equation of Dieu and its inevitable monotheistic significance with the impersonal *theos*, which for Pindar could have held no monotheistic implications.

When, on the other hand, Ronsard writes in the ode to Cardinal Jean Du Bellay (II, 120): «Il n'i a tant seulement Qu'un genre des dieus» (ἓν θεῶν γένος, Nem., VI, 1), the plural dieus, whether uncapitalized as here in verse 4, or capitalized as in verse 10, is the exact equivalent of *theoi*, and obviously can have no monotheistic connotations. They are restored once again, in all their latency and imprecision, in the *Ode de la Paix* (III, 32, vv. 443-444): «Sachant que Dieu tout parfait A tout fait par sapience» (θεὸς ἅπαν ἀνύεται, Pyth., II, 49).

These examples seem to indicate that in Ronsard's mind there was no significant distinction between *theos* and Dieu. The impersonal word for God, as it occurs in Pindar, or Homer,[135] or the other Greek poets, was for Ronsard interchangeable with Dieu. Was this true also with respect to Jupiter?

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[135] Cf. Ronsard, VIII, 165, vv. 67-69, with *Iliad*, XXIV, 525-526.

When Ronsard asks: Is there anything in the world that is not under the power of kings «qui... apres DIEU commandent? Jupiter est leur Pere...» (VIII, 25), the distinction between Jupiter and Dieu seems to have vanished entirely — there is neither latency nor imprecision in the equation of the two divinities. In the *Hymne de la Justice* that equation is widened to include, besides Jupiter, two of the most significant figures of the pantheon:

> Car Jupiter, Pallas, Apollon, sont les noms
> Que le seul DIEU reçoit en meintes nations
> Pour ses divers effectz que l'on ne peut comprendre,
> Si par mille surnoms on ne les fait entendre.[136]
>
> (VIII, 69; cf. X, 102, vv. 5-8)

God's essential nature is not, however, limited to cumulating the attributes of Jupiter, Pallas, and Apollo. If he is to be intuited in his infinite variety, there can be no limitation of his essence and power. He is named in the verse immediately following: «Ce DIEU, ce Tout-puissant.»

Just as Pindar had alternated between Zeus and *theos* in the conceptual movement of his poetry toward the ideal unity of the divine «dans la plénitude de la beauté intellectuelle et morale», so Ronsard, when he came to write of the relationship between the art of poetry and the divine, in which that plenitude could attain its most perfect realization, alternated between Jupiter and Dieu only to come to rest in the serene recognition that they were one: «Sur toutes choses tu auras les Muses en reverence... comme les filles de Jupiter, c'est à dire de Dieu, qui de sa saincte grace a premierement par elles faict cognoistre aux peuples ignorans les excellences de sa majesté» (XIV, 4).

Pindar may never, as James Adam believed, have construed «the inferior Gods as particular names or aspects of the one supreme Being», but Ronsard in 1555 had expressed that thought in the *Hymne de la Justice*, and returned to it ten years later in the *Art poëtique*: «Car les Muses, Apollon, Mercure, Pallas & autres telles deitez ne nous representent autre chose que les puissances de Dieu, auquel les premiers hommes avoyent donné plusieurs noms pour les divers effectz de son incomprehensible majesté» (XIV, 6; cf. XVI, 345). Nowhere does Ronsard, in speaking of the deities of the pantheon, of the Muses, and of their profound affinity with God, express himself with deeper sincerity than in these pages of the *Art poëtique*.

In a recently published article[137] Verdun L. Saulnier reproduced for the first time since the sixteenth century a liminary sonnet in fifteen verses signed by Ronsard, that the poet, as Saulnier conjectures, had composed toward

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[136] See R. Lebègue, VIII, 369 (3e tirage revu et augmenté, 1973, *Appendice*).

[137] «Des vers inconnus de Ronsard: Ronsard et les Lavardin», *BHR*, XXXIX (1977), 229-238.

the end of his life for the manuscript of Jean de Lavardin's *Livre premier des Dialogues traitans de la majesté de Dieu*. «Ces vers, même sans signature», Saulnier rightly says, «ne seraient pas de n'importe qui» (p. 236). They interest us for that reason, of course, but particularly, in the present context, because they appear at the head of a book which treats «de la majesté de Dieu»:

Dieu qui estoit à l'homme inaccessible,
Dieu qui n'estoit mesuré ny compris,
Dieu qui passoit l'aigu de noz espris,
Dieu dont le nom est un nom indicible,

Ce Dieu tout grand, tout incompréhensible,
Par ton labeur a maintenant apris
D'estre congneu, et tes doctes escris
Ont l'impossible aux hommes fait possible.

En ce discours, vertueux Lavardin,
Parlant de Dieu tu te monstres divin.
Si pour descrire une province estrange,
Un bois, un fleuve, un rocher esventé
Un escrivain de la Parque se vange,
Combien ta Muse est digne de louange
Qui chantant Dieu toute chose a chanté.[138]

RONSARD.

Before the ineffable mystery of the nature of God, Ronsard does not, like Pindar in the fragment preserved by Clement of Alexandria,[139] make explicit inquiry of his own spirit. But questions similar to those which Pindar had asked: «What is God? What is he not?» are perhaps audible *en sourdine* in the third line. The final verse of the sonnet, however, gives unmuted the same answer that Pindar had given: «τὸ πᾶν, God is the All», the same answer that Ronsard himself, after Marullus' *Coelo*, had given many years earlier when he invoked the heavens in the *Hymne du Ciel*:

87 Tu n'as en ta grandeur commencement, ne bout,
Tu es tout dedans toy, de toutes choses tout...
111 Bref, voyant tes effectz, en doute suis de toy
Si je te dois nommer meilleur pere que Roy.

(VIII, 147-149)

Thus Ronsard adds another name, Ciel, to the enumeration of divinities to whom he turns in worship. It is certain that the multiplicity of names does not in any way touch his conviction of the unity of the divine Being whom they designate. If anything, the prayer on behalf of the souls of Jean Morel

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138 Cf. XV, 46, v. 176.

139 See above, present chapter, n. 122. Cf. Isth., V, 53.

and Ronsard that brings the *Hymne du Ciel* to a close, like the one that Pindar addressed to Zeus in the first Pythian ode, transcends the notions both of prayer and praise, profoundly absorbed as it is in a sentiment of confiding and mystical adoration:

> Sois sainct de quelque nom que tu voudras, ô Pere,[140]
> A qui de l'Univers la nature obtempere,
> Aimantin, varié, azuré, tournoyant,
> Filz de Saturne, Roy treshaut, & tout voyant,
> Ciel, grand Palais de Dieu, exauce ma priere:
> Quand la Mort deslira mon ame prisonniere,
> Et celle de Morel, hors de ce corps humain,
> Daigne les reçevoir, bening, dedans ton sein
> Apres mille travaux, & vueille de ta grace
> Chez toy les reloger en leur premiere place.
> (VIII, 149)

[140] R. Trousson, «Ronsard et la légende d'Hercule», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), 85, reminds us that Dante, in *Purgatorio*, VI, 118-119, identifies Zeus and Christ: «... o sommo Giove, / Che fosti in terra per noi crocifisso», and adds, «Avec l'humanisme... l'adhésion à l'esprit l'emporte sur la fidélité à la lettre. L'interprétation symbolique des mythes grecs se répand et 'conduit à constater la parenté foncière de cette sagesse profane [...] avec celle de l'Ecriture. [...] Dans ces conditions, il était fatal que s'insinuât [...] l'idée que toutes les religions se valent, et que sous leurs formes diverses [...] se cache une commune vérité'». The quotation is from J. Seznec, *La Survivance des dieux antiques*, pp. 89-90.

Chapter XVIII

IMAGE, SYMBOL, IDEA (I)

I. The Profusion of Imagery in Pindar

One of the most attractive qualities of Pindar's odes is the abundance, beauty, and immense variety of their imagery. His pages are alive with hundreds of images: of the earth and fields and their harvests; of flowers and trees and all growing things; of honey and milk and wine and nectar; of roads and paths accross the lands of Greece and the Mediterranean Sea; of journeys to the ends of the known world and beyond; of weaving and of merchandise transported in Phoenician ships; of flying and sailing and casting anchor; of rain and flood and spring and torrent; of the javelins, racing-chariots and wrestling-matches of the Great Games; images from the flight of bees, the soaring of eagles, and the chattering of crows; from sharpening on a whetstone and forging on an anvil; from monuments and steles and the treasure-houses of Delphi; from gold likened to fire blazing in the night; from the sun flaming in the solitary sky; or the dreaming shadow that is the life of man transfigured by a sudden radiance that only the gods can give.

Among all of these images, rapid metaphors for the most part, more relevant than the simile to the needs of lyric poetry,[1] it would be difficult to find one that does not live with an inward vitality. Just as in Homer, the image, in virtue of the rich significance it conveys, is more than an ornament,[2] so in Pindar it was called irresistibly into being to fill an immediate poetic, emotional, intellectual, or religious need.

«Un charme étrange et complexe se dégage de l'infini jaillissement des images pindariques. Elles naissent les unes des autres, s'évanouissent en tou-

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[1] Croiset, p. 395; Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 239-240; Péron, pp. 10-11. Péron, p. 10, analyzes the difference in poetic value between simile and metaphor: «la comparaison explique, la métaphore implique; l'une est analytique et logique, l'autre synthétique et intuitive; enfin... la métaphore suppose toujours la modification du sens d'un mot, la comparaison nullement.» To this one might add from Pierre Louis, *Les Métaphores de Platon* (1945), pp. 5-6, «... la comparaison apparaît toujours comme un hors-d'œuvre facilement détachable, tandis que la métaphore est absolument indispensable au sens de la phrase.»

[2] Péron, p. 9.

chant le sol en gerbes d'étincelles... Images, certes, d'une splendeur rare. Mais, à n'y voir que des images, on serait loin d'avoir saisi tout ce qu'elles apportent, venu de très loin au delà des sens, capté sous un horizon inconnu où le poète seul, par son privilège divin peut avoir accès avant de revenir auprès de nous enrichi d'un mystérieux butin, dont pour nous il distille au nom des Muses le miel parfumé.»[3]

Croiset, too, had remarked on the profusion of Pindar's figures,[4] «le caractère le plus saillant de la langue de Pindare» (p. 392), especially the incessant flow of brilliant metaphors,[5] periphrases, epithets, and word combinations. But he adds that for an understanding of the images and metaphors of Pindar, it does not suffice to enumerate them — one must study the manner in which his imagination functions. «Or l'imagination de Pindare présente ce caractère remarquable d'être à la fois très ouverte aux impressions vives, fortes, éclatantes du monde visible et très attentive aux idées abstraites... Pindare ne se borne pas... à recevoir du monde extérieur une impression purement sensible... Ce reflet du monde extérieur tombe... sur une intelligence pénétrante, active, déjà philosophique, qui voit l'abstrait dans le concret, l'esprit dans la matière, l'universel dans le particulier, et qui, au lieu de se borner à réfléchir docilement les impressions reçues du dehors, les transforme, les spiritualise, les pénètre de sa propre substance» (p. 393). Thanks to this ceaseless communication between the sensible and the intelligible, Croiset continues, Pindar's language is at once plastic and abstract, full of imagery and yet general, so that even the commonplace receives new life with the imprint of the poet's personality.[6]

II. Thought and Imagination

In her sensitive book on the images of the *Divine Comedy*, which raises fundamental questions relevant to our inquiry on the relationship between thought and imagination, Yvonne Batard asks, «Comment expliquer que,

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[3] Duchemin, p. 229.

[4] Hundreds of them are listed under a great variety of headings by A.L. Keith, *Simile and Metaphor in Greek Poetry from Homer to Aeschylus* (Chicago, 1914), pp. 79-101.

[5] Cf. Péron, p. 12: «Car l'image royale chez Pindare est bien la métaphore», especially the brief metaphor «pour traduire le monde en visions rapides, fulgurantes...»

[6] Cf. Dornseiff, p. 54: «Am bildlichen Ausdruck ist der Winkel sichtbar, unter dem der betreffende Dichter Menschen und Dinge sieht. Was ihn stärker zum Beleben anregt, ist irgendwie pathosbetont bei seiner Eingestelltheit. Da ist eine Art Erkenntnistheorie der Dichterseele möglich, ein Messverfahren seines Empfindens, eine Charakterkunde... diese vielen Bedeutungsübertragungen und -verschiebungen, das sind alles Züge, in denen sich das Sein des Dichters auswirkt.» See also Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 245-246.

depuis six cents ans, on ait étudié surtout le sens de la *Divine Comédie*?... Ne connaîtrait-on pas mieux le poème, ne l'admirerait-on pas davantage, si l'on faisait porter aussi sur les images tant d'efforts, centrés sur la pensée de Dante et qui risquent de laisser dans la pénombre le mode d'expression qui, précisément, la constitue poème?»[7]

The answer to this question must, of course, be strongly in the affirmative, but one is obliged to add that the more deeply one reads into her book, the more one become aware of the extent to which the study of Dante's images contributes to an understanding of the thought which drew them from virtual into actual existence. Could it have been otherwise in the case of a poet as philosophic as Dante? That Yvonne Batard was herself convinced that this was the genuine nature of the relationship between thought and image in the *Divine Comedy* is clear from the fact that the name of Minerva precedes that of Apollo in the title of her thesis, as it does in the verses (8-9) from the second canto of *Paradiso* which conclude the Introduction:

> Minerva spira, e conducemi Apollo,
> e nove Muse mi dimostran l'Orse.

And at the end of her inquiry she adds (p. 477): «Minerve est l'intelligence, le génie d'Apollon la complète... quand Minerve souffle les idées, Apollon prend la direction du poème.»

«L'image ne serait-elle pas antérieure à l'idée chez Dante?» Yvonne Batard asks in a passage which might with almost no modification be applied to Pindar, and which analyzes with discernment and *esprit de finesse* the hidden sources of poetic creativity. Anterior, she continues, not only in the sense in which many poets think first in images, but in the sense in which observation, memory, psychological penetration, the multiplicity and profundity of impressions provide collections of images, sleeping inventories («stocks dormants»), which are awakened by the slightest analogy, by the most subtle, the most fleeting relationship, perceived by the extraordinarily agile mind of Dante.[8]

To seek to establish the anteriority of image to thought in the vision of Dante or of other philosophical poets would seem to be an illusory, though generous, endeavor. It would be equally illusory if the effort were addressed to the poetic «intelligence pénétrante, déjà philosophique»[9] of Pindar, for everything that a poet may have observed or felt is necessarily anterior to the moment of its expression in verse. «No one would deserve this name of

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[7] Batard, p. 16.

[8] *Op. cit.*, p. 61.

[9] Croiset, p. 393.

poet», said Santayana, «— and who deserves it more than Dante? — if real sights and sounds never impressed him; and he would hardly deserve it either, if they impressed him only physically, and for what they are in themselves».[10] Elsewhere in the same essay Santayana refers to «The modern reader, accustomed to insignificant, wayward fictions, and expecting to be entertained by images without thoughts...»[11] which is assuredly not the case of Yvonne Batard.

One ought perhaps to make an essential distinction between the notions of anteriority and priority. Many of the needed images are no doubt already in existence among the sleeping inventories in a poet's mind before he puts pen to paper, but once that is done it is his creative thought alone that gives them intellectual and poetic life. The image may be *anterior* to the writing of a verse, but the thought is *prior* to the evocation of the image.

I shall not attempt to reconcile Yvonne Batard's reflections on the anteriority of the image with an earlier passage in her book in which she also associates thought and imagination in Dante and which I confess seems to me to approach more nearly to the truth: «*On dirait qu'une raison impérieuse mène cette exubérante imagination*, la freine ou la détend à son gré et *règne sur toute l'œuvre*, rivée, limée, burinée, et pourtant vibrante d'une sensibilité profonde, indomptée, tantôt fraîche et délicate, tantôt rude, violente, passionné. Du coup, d'autres questions affluent: quelle est la place de l'imagination dans la poésie de Dante? Est-elle maîtresse, est-elle servante?»[12] Perhaps the answer is neither msitress nor servant, any more than Minerva and Apollo, the inspiring and guiding divinities of Dante, stand in this relationship to each other. They are but aspects of a single almost unattainable aspiration — to fuse image and thought, in the service of an ideal, within the indissoluble unity of a poem.

For Pindar, as for all the poets of Greece, the immediate patrons of poetry and music were Apollo and the Muses, and one does not have to read between the lines of the prelude to the first Pythian ode to realize that they granted infinitely more than a gift of harmony without meaning, technique without intellectual and moral substance, image and symbol without thought. The name of Athena is absent from this prelude, but the wisdom which was her divine endowment underlies every word of it. Pindar's reverence for Athena, who was the daughter of Metis, Wisdom, as much as of

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[10] George Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1927), p. 95.

[11] *Op. cit.*, p. 128.

[12] Batard, p. 20; my emphasis.

Zeus, is evident more than once in passages which describe her as the divinity who bestowed all manner of skills on mankind (Ol., VII, 50-51), and as the inventor of flute-playing, in which Apollo himself was her student[13] (Pyth., XII, 5-8, 19-26). But the poet's veneration of the goddess is most strikingly manifest in the lines which portray the manner of her birth:

> When by the craft of Hephaestus
> And his axe of beaten bronze
> From the top of her father's head
> Athene leapt forth, and cried aloud with a mighty shout,
> And the Sky shuddered at her, and Mother Earth.[14]

Bowra strikes exactly the right note when he says, «The dominating mood is of awe and amazement and shock, almost of fear, at so prodigious an event», and when he describes this extraordinary divine birth as a «cosmic concussion». In the paragraph he devotes to these verses Bowra, it is true, seems to emphasize the military rather than the intellectual attributes of Athena, but there is an ineffaceable impression that if she had been in Pindar's thought and verse nothing more than a feminine Ares, Bowra would not have written so overpowering a description of her birth. The translation that Georges Méautis gives of these verses rightly employs military language: «Lorsque Athéna jaillit du front de son père, elle poussa un cri de guerre, un cri d'une puissance qui surpassa tout. Le ciel en frissonna ainsi que la Terre Mère.» But he adds at once, persuaded by the more truly significant aspect of the myth, «On dirait presque que les Grecs ont voulu exprimer le brusque jaillissement de l'intelligence créatrice».[15]

It was this creative intelligence that Dante, who could not have known much more of Pindar than his name, saw in Minerva through the eyes of the poets and thinkers of Greece and Rome. When he addressed her in prayer before Apollo and the Muses, he was asserting the priority of creative intelligence to image and symbol in poetry. It was a prayer which Pindar had uttered, tacitly, but not less powerfully, two millennia earlier.

From the divinities of intelligence and poetry Pindar received the gift of thinking in images. He «thinks hard about a subject before he writes about it, and puts into it his gathered experience and conclusions, and though his thought is largely imaginative or dramatic or emotional, it is none the less

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[13] Farnell, II, 234, quoting Plutarch, *De Mus.*, p. 1136 B.

[14] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 222, slightly modified after Sandys, p. 75. Cf. Farnell, II, 52-53, who emphasizes the intellectual significance of the birth of Athena when he says, «The smithwright who sets her free is... sometimes Prometheus». — Other versions of the myth are in Hesiod's *Theogony*, 929[a]-929[t] (ed. Evelyn-White) and in *Homeric Hymn* XXVIII.

[15] Méautis, p. 407.

thought. It works more through images than through maxims... but it is active alike in the structure of a poem, the treatment of a myth...»[16] Indeed, according to the persuasive testimony of Jacques Péron, the intellectual tendencies in Pindar become progressively more pronounced: «Au cours de son évolution poétique Pindare s'intéresse moins à la valeur formelle des mots, à l'image qu'ils évoquent, qu'à l'idée contenue en eux: l'image, de plus en plus, n'est qu'un moyen propre à définir l'essence même de l'objet. D'autre part, dans la mesure où l'image est empruntée à l'univers sensible, le mélange des métaphores n'a pas seulement une importance esthétique, mais philosophique et religieuse, car il correspond à la vision d'un monde aux éléments constamment mêlés — ainsi le divin et l'humain — ou en perpétuelle transformation.»[17]

This habit of mind is visible on every page, literally in every strophe of Pindar's odes.[18] It pervades every field of experience which came under his observation, most especially the field of poetry itself, to which his thought was often turned and in which it never ceased to grow.

Frequently these images were taken from, and returned with deepened grace and significance, to the athletic festivals which the poems glorified. Elsewhere I have shown how he created a wealth of metaphors in order to express the myriad aspects in which the meaning of poetry presented itself to him.[19] But there is still a drift of lovely images unstirred — all images of poetry.

It is poetry that gives to life its freshness and bloom, it is ζωθάλμιος (Ol., VII, 11), a word which is itself an image, and makes periphrase inept. «May we gain good fortune of the Muses», says Pindar, «so that we may kindle a torch of hymns for Melissus» (Isth., IV, 43-44). When he is invited to a festival he brings a bowl of songs as a gift (Isth., VI, 1-2). «Strike up the lyre! Behold, the Muse is welding gold and white ivory in one, with a lily flower [of coral] that she hath plucked from beneath the deep sea's dew» (Nem., VII, 77-79). The musical notes of the lyre are arrows tipped with a drowsy venom, so potent is their effect on the eagle who slumbers on the scepter of Zeus (Pyth., I, 6-10).

Though Pindar wrote no explicit theory of poetry, Bowra has drawn from the extant odes and fragments the substance of Pindar's implicit theo-

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[16] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 393.

[17] Péron, pp. 14-15.

[18] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 255: «Pindar's language is so inextricably interwoven with images that we take them almost for granted and assume that they are a natural element in his thinking.»

[19] *POR*, pp. 37-39; cf. pp. 51-52.

retical ideas which constitute the first chapter, «The Theory of Poetry», of his *Pindar*. Bowra's book begins with the sentence: «No Greek poet says so much as Pindar about his art», and what especially characterizes this chapter is the frequency with which Pindar's statements on poetry are expressed in images.[20]

«He speaks about poetry in its own language», Bowra says. «Normally, when he speaks of his own function, it is in image or metaphor... He comes nearest to a definition of his own position when he speaks of himself as ἀοίδιμον Πιερίδων προφάταν (*Pae.*, 6. 6)... 'the prophet of the Muses in song'.» For a poet who left no writings on the principles of his craft «Pindar watches his own creative processes with an attentive percipience and speaks of them in the only way possible to him, in images.»[21]

In the poetry of Ronsard, as in that of Pindar, imagery constitutes one of the most fundamental and pervasive elements. As Laumonier puts it, since the essential nature of poetry is to discover the secret correspondences which exist between the various phenomena grasped by our senses, or between those of the physical world and the ideas or sentiments of the moral world, one must expect to find in Ronsard a very large number of metaphors, that is to say, terms transposed from one object to another in virtue of a tacit comparison.[22] The innumerable metaphors listed by Laumonier in the pages on «Les odes pindariques [de Ronsard] proprement dites», are all from the odes of the Theban poet. Ronsard was powerfully drawn to these images and introduced into his own poems the ones he thought adaptable to a literary and social situation far removed in time, space, and mores from those of ancient Greece.[23] Among these the images relevant to poetry occupied an important place.

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[20] Keith (see above, n. 4) points out, p. 83-84, Pindar's almost complete originality in this respect: «Of a similar tendency in preceding poets there are only slight traces.»

[21] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 2, 3, 14.

[22] *RPL*, p. 318.

[23] In this endeavor he was not always successful, as the following fundamental analysis by Laumonier demonstrates: «Très souvent la métaphore a bien servi Ronsard dans sa réaction contre l'école de la 'prose rimée'. Il eut seulement le tort d'en abuser. Cette figure est la plus propre à représenter la pensée, à la colorer, à l'illuminer; mais encore faut-il qu'elle offre au lecteur une image qui lui soit familière, ou, du moins, ne soit pas étrangère aux mœurs du temps et du pays où il vit; autrement elle manque son but. Ronsard ne l'a pas compris, et là encore il a suivi trop servilement les traces de Pindare, contemporain d'une civilisation très différente de la nôtre. Plus de deux mille ans le séparaient de son modèle! Ce qui convenait à l'imagination des Grecs, habitués à l'atmosphère brillante de l'Hellade, aux courses de chars, aux libations de la religion païenne, au maniement du disque et du javelot, à tout un ordre d'idées et de sensations particulières, ne convenait pas aux Français du XVI[e] siècle et encore moins à leurs descendants. Après un tri judicieux, Ronsard aurait dû ne conserver que les images empruntées aux habitudes permanentes, aux visions éternelles de l'humanité, et y joindre celles que lui suggéraient les mœurs des temps modernes.» *RPL*, p. 321. See also *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 353, and Vianey, p. 37.

III. The Winged Word

When in the *Avertissement au Lecteur* of 1550 Ronsard expressed his resentment of those who had criticized him for his frequent use of winged images such as «les ailes de mes vers», or «un trait ailé», or «empaner la memoire», he pointed out that in so doing he was an «imitateur des poëtes Grecs, & principalement d'Homer» (I, 55). Undoubtedly he had in mind expressions like ἔπεα πτερόεντα and ἰὸν πτερόεντα (cf. III, 123, n. 2), which occur so frequently in the Homeric epics, but more immediately present to his mind may have been the images of archery and of winged flight as metaphors of poetry which he had just been reading in Pindar.

The first Isthmian for Pindar's fellow-citizen Herodotus of Thebes ends with a prayer that the victor may be lifted on the shining wings of the sweet-voiced Muses. Like Ronsard so many centuries later, who knew that the winged word of the poet, his «parolle empennée» (III, 123), was the surest pledge of immortality, Pindar does not forget that but for Homer the epic heroes would not have gained eternal renown: «I imagine that Odysseus hath won fame far beyond all his sufferings, thanks to the sweet lays of Homer. For on Homer's fictions and on his winged skill [ποτανᾷ μαχανᾷ], there resteth a solemn spell» (Nem., VII, 20-23). Thus the imagery of Ronsard's verses *A René d'Urvoi*, after Horace (*Odes*, IV, ix, 21-28):

> Du grand Hector la memoire
> Fust ja morte, si les vers
> N'eussent empané sa gloire
> Voletant par l'univers...
>
> (II, 150; cf. XIII, 257, v. 30)

possesses at two removes an insurmountable antiquity. And the ode to Urvoy ends with a thought that recalls Pindar's prayer for Herodotus of Thebes: «La Muse... Seule nous éleve aus cieus...»

On this high level of experience Pindar entreated the divinities whom he venerated to allow him a share in their attributes. To Apollo's shrine he prays, «O golden Pytho, that art famed for thine oracles, I beseech thee, by the Olympian Zeus... to welcome me... as a prophet of the tuneful Pierides» (Paean VI, 1-6). And to the Muse herself, «Muse! be thou mine oracle, and I shall be thy prophet» (frag. 150, p. 601). What wonder, then, that in writing of himself and his poetic vocation he should adopt the winged imagery of arrows in flight in which the divine functions of Apollo and the Muses were represented by all Greek singers.

«Come bend thy bow on the mark, O my soul — at whom again are we to launch our shafts of honour from a friendly mind» (Ol., II, 89-90).[24] «Full

[24] Tr. Myers.

many an arrow hath my deftly speaking tongue to ring out in praise of those heroes» (Isth., V, 46-48). The heroes in question were athletes of Aegina, an island dear to Pindar's heart as the homeland of the sailors who had done so much and at such terrible cost to win the glorious victory of Salamis (48-50). He praises another Aeginetan in language that silently invites comparison between himself and Homer, as the ode to Aristomenes is «sped with the wings of my skill [ἐμᾷ ποτανὸν ἀμφὶ μαχανᾷ]» (Pyth., VIII, 34).

When a favorable occasion presented itself, remotely resembling those for which triumphal odes were written by Greek poets, Ronsard employed imagery identical with that of Pindar to glorify a victorious military hero. For François de Bourbon he speeds from the bow an arrow «de ta victoire ailé» and dipped in the honey of the Muse (I, 84). For Henri II, in celebration of the successful conclusion of a treaty of peace with England,

> Muse, bande ton arc dous,
> Muse ma douce esperance,
> Quel prince fraperons nous,
> L'enfonçant parmi la France?
> (I, 62; cf. I, 170)

The same historic event elicits similar praise for Anne de Montmorency who had conducted the negotiations for France:

> Il me plest or de decocher
> Mes trais thebains pour les ficher
> Dedans les raions de ta gloire...
> (III, 27)

It is needless to insist on the artificiality of such parallels to the athletic victories in the Great Games. More natural was Ronsard's use of the imagery of the arrow and the winged word to express his gratitude or admiration for certain of his contemporaries. After eulogizing the wisdom, justice, and incorruptibility of Michel de l'Hospital, he adds:

> J'avise au bruit de ces motz
> Toute France, qui regarde
> Mon trait qui droictement darde
> Le riche but de ton loz.
> (III, 161; cf. I, 135)

But it was in the Pindaric ode *A Jouachim du Bellai Angevin*, which describes how much Ronsard and his fellow-poet had suffered from the attacks of the «mesdisans impetueus», and which strongly hints at the collaboration of the two friends in the imitation of Pindar,[25] that the imagery of the winged flight of poetry carries to its highest and most enduring realm

[25] See my article, «Ronsard and Du Bellay on their Pindaric Collaboration», *RR*, XXXIII (1942), 3-25.

Les nourriçons des neuf Pucelles,
Qui se sont mis au dos des ailes
Pour voler eternellement.
(I, 120; cf. II, 38)

IV. Floral Images of Song

The association of floral imagery with song in Greece is probably at least as ancient as the association of the laurel with Apollo. The wreaths conferred on the victors in the Games consisted of flowers intertwined with the foliage of the laurel or the olive. The choice of these two plants was not dictated solely by the wish to present the victor with a sign of his triumph, but to symbolize the immortality of renown he had won, «puisqu'il s'était révélé un surhomme». The flowers bring to Pindar's verses the living adornment of their ephemeral beauty, «qu'il fixe dans l'éternité».[26]

Nothing, then, could have been more natural for Pindar than to have conceived of his songs in the imagery of flowers, garlands, and crowns, especially since the triumphal odes were themselves part and parcel of the Games, indeed the flower of victory in those contests. For Pindar knew, as did every Greek from the time of Homer, that immortality was granted to men only in song: «The olden glory sleepeth, and mortals are unmindful, save of that which winneth its way to the perfect bloom of poesy by being blended with the sounding streams of song» (Isth., VII, 16-19).[27] When Pindar, at the end of the sixth Olympian (101-105), prays to Poseidon for the safe return of Hagesias to Syracuse, his last entreaty to the god is to «give new growth to the gladsome flower of my songs». (Cf. Ol., IX, 48-49). It was as inconceivable to present a victor with an ode feebly rekindled, so to speak, from an earlier celebration, as to crown him with a withered wreath. Inevitably an identity arose in Pindar's mind between image and song, between garland and ode, in view of his profound conviction that «I, by the ordering of destiny, am tilling the choicest garden of the Graces» (Ol., IX, 26-27).

In the years of his fascination with Pindar Ronsard was steeped in the floral imagery of the triumphal odes, an imagery that must have been particularly congenial to him.[28] He promises Du Bellay the immortality that only verse can give, flowers of verse that he has gathered in the garden of the Graces:

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[26] Duchemin, pp. 243-245, 237. See also pp. 225-226, which refer to Pindar's allusions to the golden leaves of olive and laurel as Apollo's promise of immortality.

[27] Cf. Dornseiff, p. 59.

[28] See *RGTP* pp. 253-256.

Nous avons bien moi, & mon mettre,
Cette audace de te promettre
Que tes labeurs seront appris
De nous, de nos suivantes races,
S'il est vrai que j'aie des Graces
Cueilli les fleurs dans leur pourpris...

Jadis Pindare sur la sienne[29]
Acorda la guerre ancienne
Des Geans de foudre couvers,
Et je sonnerai ta louange,
Et l'envoirai de Loire à Gange,
Desus les ailes de mes vers.
(II, 37-38)

Ronsard kept this promise, but Michel de l'Hospital was its beneficiary, rather than Du Bellay. It was for the Chancellor that the Muses of Ronsard sang the Gigantomachy, vast symbol of the establishment of the reign of universal Concord and Justice, it was for l'Hospital that Ronsard gathered the threefold garland of Theban song in the Graces' garden:

Errant par les champs de la Grace
Qui peint mes vers de ses couleurs,
Sus les bords Dirceans j'amasse
Le tesor des plus riches fleurs,
Affin qu'en pillant je façonne
D'une laborieuse main,
La rondeur de ceste couronne
Trois fois torce d'un ply Thebain:
Pour orner le hault de la gloire
Du plus heureux Mignon des Dieux,
Qui çà bas r'amena des Cieux
Les filles qu'enfanta Memoire.
(III, 118-119)

V. Honey and Nectar: Draughts of Immortality

Though the fundamental law of lyric poetry and especially of the triumphal ode, as Ronsard well knew, was to «celebrer les honneurs des hommes, favorisés par mes vers» (I, 48), he also understood that the praise and the glory were not in themselves the ends sought either by the poet or the person he extolled. «Longer than deeds liveth the word», Pindar had said, «whatsoever it be that the tongue, by the favour of the Graces, draweth forth from the depth of the mind» (Nem., IV, 6-8). «And even when dead, [Achilles] was not forsaken of song, but, beside his funeral pyre and tomb, there stood

[29] The antecedent is *lire*.

the maids of Helicon, and poured over him the dirge of many voices» (Isth., VIII, 56-58). The supreme gift in the possession of the poet was the immortality of the word in song. Homer himself, speaking with the voice of the Muses, had nothing greater to bestow.

Through the ministry of the poet the Muse offers the heroes a draught of immortality,[30] the triumphal ode. «To victorious men I send my liquid nectar, the Muses' gift, the sweet fruit of my mind» (Ol., VII, 7-8). To one who had carried off the prize in the pancratium: «I am sending this honey-sweet strain, mingled with white milk and the foam of its mingling mantleth around it, — a draught of poetry accompanied by the breathing of Aeolian flutes» (Nem., III, 76-79). «Entre la métaphore et la réalité il n'y a... aucune solution de continuité, puisque l'eau des chants immortels étanche la soif (*Pyth.*, IX, 103), exactement comme la source bienfaisante étanche la soif du voyageur... Les chants étanchent la soif d'immortalité du héros de l'hymne et de sa famille: ainsi comprenons-nous la lumineuse image sur laquelle se clôt la VI[e] *Isthmique*: 'Je les abreuverai... de l'eau de Dircé, que les vierges à l'ample ceinture, les filles de Mnémosyne au voile d'or ont fait jaillir...»[31]

Quite independently of these or any other passages in Pindar, Ronsard was profoundly conscious in every period of his life of the poet's power to grant immortality. Scores of utterances attest to this conviction. He must have felt a natural affinity for what in Pindar was almost a dogma. One can hardly doubt that this affinity, tinged with a reminiscence of the Platonic doctrine of poetic μανία, shaped the final sentence of the preface *Au lecteur* of 1550, so largely dominated by the thought of Pindar: «Les doctes folies des poëtes survivront les innombrables siecles avenir, criants la gloire des princes consacrés par eus à l'immortalité» (I, 50).

The Pindaric imagery which associated the sweetness of honey and the nectar of the immortals with Ronsard's verses colored his early writing to such a degree that it apparently evoked the criticism of some contemporaries who objected to «atomes» like «le miel de mes vers» or «mes vers sucrés» (I, 55). There are moments when the criticism seems not without justification. For example, after words of praise for the «vertu» of Carnavalet, Ronsard writes:

> Pour ce-la ma *douce* corde
> Parlant ta gloire s'accorde
> Avecq' le son de mes vers.
>
> Lesquels en *douceur* parfaite
> Apparoistre se sont faits
> Sur le rivage du Loir...

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[30] Duchemin, p. 42; cf. pp. 247-248, 273-275, and see Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 23-25.

[31] Duchemin, p. 253.

In passing he evokes the Pindaric theme that accomplishments go for naught if the lyre falls silent, but adds that the sweetness of his music will give Carnavalet a foretaste of immortality:

> Mais la mienne *emmiellée*
> Qui sçait les lois de mon doi,
> Aveq' les flutes meslée
> Chassera l'oubli de toi.
> Les neuf divines Pucelles
> Gardent la gloire chez elles,
> Et mon luc qu'els ont fait estre
> De leurs secrés le grand prestre,
> Bruiant un chant solennel,
> Epandra de sus ta face
> Le *dous sucre* de sa grace,
> Dont le gout semble eternel.
>
> (I, 97-98)

In a non-triadic ode inspired in part by Pindar Ronsard promises Bertrand Berger that the sweetness of his verses will assure the immortality of their *destinataire* as effectively as the odes of the Greek lyric poets did the eternal renown of their coevals:

> Si j'ai jamais des mon enfance
> Abreuvé de mes vers la France
> Repandant leur sucre tant dous,
> Ores plus douce il te faut estre
> Chanson, qui dois servir un maistre
> Que je prise par dessus tous...
>
> L'audacieuse encre d'Alçée
> Par les ans n'est point efacée,
> Et vivent encore les sons,
> Que l'amante[32] bailloit en garde
> A sa Tortue babillarde
> L'animant de belles chansons.
>
> Mon grand Pindare vit encore,
> Et Simonide, & Stesichore,
> Si-non en vers, aumoins par nom,
> Et de cela que sus sa lire
> Anacreon a voulu dire
> Le tens n'efface le renom.
>
> (I, 139-140; cf. I, 73-74)

This was the theme chosen by Ronsard for the prelude of the Pindaric ode *Au Roi* to stand as the symbol of a promised immortality at the head of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes*:

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[32] Sappho. The «Tortue babillarde» of the next verse is the soundbox of the lyre made of a tortoise shell.

En mon dous Nectar j'abreuve[33]
Le plus grand Roi qui se treuve,
Soit en armes ou en lois.

Heureus l'honneur que j'embrasse,
Heureus qui se peut vanter
De voir la Thebaine Grace
Qui sa vertu veut chanter:
L'aiant pour ma guide, SIRE,
Autre bien je ne desire,
Que d'apparoistre à tes yeus,
Le saint Harpeur de ta gloire,
Et l'archer de ta memoire
Pour la tirer dans les cieus.

((I, 61-62)

VI. The Poet-Bee

«Le miel, associé fréquemment... au don de la prophétie,[34] l'est forcément aussi à celui de la poésie, si voisin du premier aux yeux de Pindare. De fait le poète (*Pyth.*, X, 53) se compare lui-même à l'abeille, car, dit-il, 'mes beaux hymnes de louange volent [comme une abeille — ὥτε μέλισσα] d'un sujet à l'autre'.»[35]

From the beginning and until the end of his poetic career this was one of Ronsard's favorite images. It is probable that in its many transformations it was enriched from sources other than the tenth Pythian,[36] but we may safely assume that Ronsard himself contributed most toward developing an image that appealed so strongly to him. In the *Ode de la Paix*, after a Pindaric admonition against his own tendency toward prolixity, he takes example from the Pindaric bee[37]:

De cette fleur que voici,
Et de celle, & celle aussi,
La mouche son miel façonne
Diversement.

(III, 23)

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[33] The same promise of immortality is conveyed in the identical image to the deceased son of François I[er] in the ode *A la Roine de Navarre sur la mort de Charles de Valois, duc d'Orleans*, I, 181, v. 32.

[34] See, for example, Pyth., IV, 60, according to which the priestess of Apollo was called the Delphic Bee. See also Slater, s.v. μέλισσα b.

[35] Duchemin, p. 251.

[36] In his notes Laumonier suggests, in addition to Pindar, Horace, *Odes*, IV, ii, 27 ff.; Lucretius, III, 11-12; Seneca, *Ad Lucilium*, the 84th epistle; he might have added Virgil, *Georgics*, IV, 163-164.

[37] Pindar had been anticipated by an earlier Greek poet, possibly Stesichorus, and Simonides and Bacchylides had also used the same image. See Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 14-15. It occurs also in Plato's *Ion*, 534.

A few years later Ronsard, in similar though less concise language, promises Charles Cardinal de Lorraine immortal fame:

> Tout ainsy que l'abeille, animal né du Ciel,
> Choisist les belles fleurs pour en faire du miel,
> Honorant son logis de ses liqueurs infuses,
> Ainsy, je choisiray les belles fleurs des Muses,
> Afin d'en émailler un livre en vostre nom,
> Pour engarder, Prelat, que vostre beau renom
> Ne soit proye des ans...
>
> (VIII, 350; cf. XI, 161)

With the passing years the image of the Poet-Bee took on even greater amplitude and movement and color. At the end of Ronsard's narrative of the myth of *Hylas*, dedicated in 1569 to Jean Passerat, it received its fullest development:

> Mon Passerat, je resemble à l'Abeille
> Qui va cueillant tantost la fleur vermeille,
> Tantost la jaune: errant de pré en pré
> Volle en la part qui plus luy vient à gré,
> Contre l'Hyver amassant force vivres:
> Ainsy courant & fueilletant mes livres,
> J'amasse, trie & choisis le plus beau,
> Qu'en cent couleurs je peints en un tableau,
> Tantost en l'autre: & maistre en ma peinture,
> Sans me forcer j'imite la Nature.
>
> (XV, 352)

In 1584, in his *Caprice* for Simon Nicolas (XVIII, 319-320), he advises the poets of his time to follow the same procedure, and urges them to draw their honey, as he had done, from a garland of Greek and Roman authors. Finally, the image found a place in the prose preface that Ronsard wrote for the *Franciade* in 1585. What had hiterto been so intimately related to his practice as a lyric poet, the image that he had in fact originally drawn from the lyric poetry of Pindar, was in the end placed in the service of epic theory, where it seemed almost equally at home: «Le Poëte heroïque invente & forge argumens tous nouveaux... tantost il est Philosophe, tantost Medecin, Arboriste, Anatomiste, & Jurisconsulte... Bref, c'est un homme, lequel comme une mousche à miel, delibe[38] & succe toutes fleurs, puis en fait du miel...» (XVI, 336).

VII. The Eagle of Zeus and the Chattering Crows

To emphasize the universal power of poetry and the lyre, symbol of harmony in the first Pythian ode, Pindar says that «Even the thunderbolt, the

[38] From Latin *delibare*, to gather.

weapon of Zeus, is quenched»[39] at the first sound of the quivering strings, and «the eagle, king of birds, sleeps on the sceptre of Zeus».[40] In Ronsard's words

> Le feu armé de Jupiter s'eteint
> Sous ta chanson...
> Son aigle dort sur la foudre à trois pointes...
> (I, 163)

There is no mistaking in the verses of either poet the sense of contained might in the images of the quenched lightning and of the slumbering eagle.

That sense of governed poetic energies of highest intensity accompanied Pindar in the writing of many of his odes, not least in the composition of the first Pythian in the year 470. But already in the second Olympian of 476 he had made the comparison, almost the identification, of himself and the eagle of Zeus. In a context that leaves no doubt that Pindar is describing his own immense poetic endowment he says, «The true poet is he who knoweth much by gift of nature, but they that have only learnt the lore of song, and are turbulent and intemperate of tongue, like a pair of crows, chatter in vain against the god-like bird of Zeus» (86-88). At an indeterminate date (474?) he wrote in the third Nemean, 80-82: «Swift among birds is the eagle, who, swooping down from afar, suddenly seizeth with his talons his blood-stained quarry; meanwhile the chattering daws have a low range of flight.»

On this passage L.R. Farnell wrote in his commentary, «The eagle is obviously Pindar... the scholiasts saw that, but unnecessarily interpreted the κραγέται κολοιοὶ [chattering daws] as a malicious reference to Bacchylides...» Farnell similarly rejects the opinion of the scholiasts that the parallel passage in the second Olympian refers to Pindar's rivals, Simonides and Bacchylides.[41] We shall perhaps never know where the truth lies, but it is a certainty that Ronsard did not share the reservations of the scrupulous modern commentator. In his preface to the 1550 *Odes*, which concludes on a polemical note against his poetic rivals, he writes, «Tel fut jadis Bacchylide à l'entour d'Hieron Roi de Sicile tant notté par les vers de Pindare...» (I, 49). In the same year, in the ode *A Madame Marguerite*, sister of Henri II, he says that Pindar had written many a poem for the king of Sicily,

> Où les broquars injurieux
> De Simonide[42] son contraire,

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[39] Gildersleeve, p. 240.

[40] Sandys, p. 155.

[41] Farnell, II, 262, 22. Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 6-7, 9-10, admits the possibility of such a reference.

[42] The variant, 1560-1587, substitutes the name of Bacchylides.

L'ont moqué, comme chez ton frere
M'ont moqué ceulx des envieux.
(III, 112)

It is not difficult to imagine Ronsard's satisfaction at discovering passages in Pindar that were in such close correspondence with his own situation. He was happy, in his Pindaric ode to Du Bellay, to go beyond the thought of the relevant verses of the second Olympian and to oppose two eagles of Zeus to the chattering crows of the Court of Henri II:

Celui qui est endoctriné
Par le seul naturel bien né
Se haste de ravir le pris:
Mais ces rimeurs qui ont apris
Avec travail, peines, & ruses,
Tousjours ils enfantent des vers
Tortus, & courans de travers
Parmi la carriere des Muses:
Eus égualés à nos chants beaus,
Ils sont semblables aus corbeaus
Lesquels desous l'ombre quaquetent
Contre deus aigles, qui aguetent
(Portans la foudre du grand Roi)[43]
Le tens de ruer leurs tempestes
Desus les miserables testes
De ces criards palles d'éfroi...
(I, 111-112)

VIII. The River in Spate

The tenth Olympian begins with Pindar's confession that he had forgotten to write an ode promised long ago to commemorate the victory by Hagesidamus of Western Locri in the boys' boxing match. He feels ashamed of his negligence, is anxious to atone for it and pay his poetic debt with usury by writing a particularly splendid ode for the youth. «Behold», he says, «how the rushing wave sweeps down the rolling shingle, and how we also will render for our friend's honour a tribute to him and his people» (tr. Myers). As C.M. Bowra explains, «The image comes not from the sea, which in Pindar's world was tideless, but from a river in spate, which rolls down the shingle in its overmastering onslaught».[44]

The prelude of Ronsard's ode *Au seigneur de Carnavalet* reproduces rather faithfully the thought of the overture to the tenth Olympian:

[43] Zeus, not Henri II.

[44] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 19.

Ma promesse ne veut pas
Que ton nom tumbe là bas
Orphelin du vrai honneur,
Ne sans avoir connoissance
Combien Ronsard a puissance,
Et dequoi il est donneur...
En oubli je l'avoi mis
Laissant glisser la memoire
Qu'autresfois je lui promis
Verser au monde sa gloire...

Le tens venant de bien loin[45]
M'a blasmé comme témoin
Du paiment de mon devoir,
Mais au pis aler l'usure
Raclera toute l'injure
Que j'en pourroi recevoir...
(I, 90-91)

Conspicuously absent, however, is the image of the river in spate symbolizing both the power of Pindar's inspiration and his will to compensate for his lapse of memory.

The image that Ronsard thus overlooked had apparently not escaped the notice of Horace who wrote in an ode magnifying the genius of Pindar;

Monte decurrens velut amnis, imbres
Quem super notas aluere ripas,
Fervet immensusque ruit profundo
Pindarus ore...
(IV, ii, 5-7)

This comparison, say Plessis and Lejay in their edition of Horace, «est d'autant mieux en place que Pindare s'en est lui-même servi en parlant de sa poésie, *Olymp.*, 10, 13».[46]

In the earliest stage of Ronsard's attraction to Pindar he found in Horace's ode imagery and language which led him in 1545 to imitate indirectly the verses of the tenth Olympian. Far more significantly, they contributed toward strengthening his Pindaric enthusiasm and his desire to renovate French poetry by leading it back to the ancient sources of European literature:

Grossi-toi ma Muse Françoise,
Et enfante un vers resonant,
Qui bruie d'une telle noise
Qu'un fleuve debordé tonant,

---

[45] «Le tems qui vint long tens apres la promesse faite par Ronsard à Carnavalé, de lui faire une Ode.» *Breve exposition de quelques passages du premier livre des Odes...* par I.M.P., II, 207.

[46] Cf. VII, 228, vv. 63-64.

Alors qu'il sacaige & emmeine,
Pillant de son flot sans merci,
Le tresor de la riche pleine,
Le beuf & le bouvier aussi.

Et fai voir aus yeus de la France
Un vers qui soit industrieus,
Foudroiyant la vieille ignorance
De nos peres peu curieus.

(I, 236-237)

The most superficial reading must reveal in these lines Ronsard's anticipation of the thesis of Du Bellay's *Deffence*. Nothing, then, could have been more natural than for Du Bellay, when he wrote the liminary sonnet for the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes*, to have encouraged his friend in Pindarico-Horatian tones to create an Olympian verse that would carry everything before it in its impetuous rush:

Comme un torrent, qui s'enfle & renouvelle
Par le degout des hauts sommés chenus,
Froissant & ponts, & rivaiges connus
Se fait (hautain) une trace nouvelle:

Tes vers Ronsard, qui par source immortelle
Du double mont sont en France venus
Courent (hardis) par sentiers inconnus
De méme audace, & de carriere telle.

(I, 56)

At approximately the time this sonnet was being composed Ronsard, defending his Pindaric initiative in an ode *A Madame Marguerite*, described the style of the Theban poet in words that Du Bellay, Horace, and even Pindar would have recognized:

Apres comme une eau debridée,
Ou comme la fouldre guindée
Sur la nue au moys le plus chault,
S'ouyt tonner la voix Dircée[47]
Qui par l'air s'est si bien dressée,
Que nulle n'a bondi plus hault...

Aussi nul chant ne s'accompare
Au chant lyrique de Pindare...

(III, 111)

[47] The voice of Pindar. — Cf. *Ancilla*, p. 175: «The precise and elaborate architectural and metrical principles upon which Pindar constructed his odes were not fully understood until modern times; what impressed Renaissance students was the ancient critics' admiration of his overwhelming torrential force. In consequence Pindar became an inspiration for an entire school of poets, of which Pierre de Ronsard was the coryphaeus but which spread to all the countries of Europe, who had a very imperfect understanding of the model they professed to follow.»

Within five or six years the obsession with Pindar was at an end and was replaced with the Anacreontic infatuation. Yet in that most famous of literary renunciations which one reads in Ronsard's *Elegie... à Chretophle de Choiseul*, the imagery of the unbridled river, that is to say, the Pindaric ode itself, coursing wildly through the structural sinuosities of its triadic form, is retained largely unchanged to express a mood and an intention which paradoxically are the reverse of those that had governed Ronsard's beginnings:

> Me loüe qui vouldra les repliz recourbez
> Des torrens de Pindare en profond embourbez,
> Obscurs, rudes, facheux, & ses chansons congnues
> Que je ne sçay comment par songes & par nuës,
> Anacreon me plaist, le doux Anacreon!
> (VIII, 356; cf. VII, 228)

But Ronsard was far from having exhausted the significant possibilities of Pindar's image transmitted by Horace. When the poet of Thebes had told Hagesidamus to observe «how the rushing wave sweeps down the rolling shingle», he was describing a power of inspiration so great as to more than compensate for his inadvertent negligence. This was the thought that filled Ronsard's mind when in 1569 he began to write the elegy *A Monsieur de Belot*, later called *La Lyre*. It describes how after periods lasting many months, during which he has felt abandoned by the Muse, he suddenly becomes aware of her inspiring presence:

> Mais aussi tost que par long intervalle
> Dedans mon cœur du Ciel elle devalle,
> Colere, ardent, furieux, agité,
> Je tramble tout soubz la divinité:
> Et comme on voit ces torrens qui descendent
> Du haut des monts & flot sur flot se rendent
> A gros bouillons en la valée, & font,
> Fendant la terre, une corne à leur front...
> Fumeux, bruyants, escumeux, & venteux,
> Et de leur corne ouvrent au devant eux
> Un long chemin sans que rien les empesche,
> Pour s'emboucher ou dans la rive fraische
> Du prochain fleuve, ou au bord reculé
> Du vieil Neptune au rivage salé:
> Ainsi je cours de course desbridée,
> Quand la fureur en moy s'est desbordée
> Sans craindre rien, sans raison, ny conseil.
> (XV, 19-20)

IX. Loom and Lyre: «Music-Weavers of the Golden Warps»

In 490 Pindar wrote the twelfth Pythian ode in honor of Midas of Acragas who had won the prize for flute-playing in that year. «The ode is unique

as being the only one of the true epinicians not commemorating an athletic victory.»[48] Since Acragas had no myth, and since this was probably true also of the family of Midas, Pindar introduces the legend that Athena had invented the art of flute-playing «when she wove into music the dismal death-dirge of the Gorgons...» (6-8).[49] This is perhaps the first occurrence of the image of woven music in the extant odes of Pindar, the twelfth Pythian being one of the poet's earliest compositions.

When he employed this image on later occasions the flute was not mentioned, and one may assume that the instrument to which Pindar then implicitly referred was the lyre, which normally provided the musical accompaniment for lyric poetry. In the sixth Olympian, for example, he writes of drinking the inspiring waters of the spring of Dirce in his native Thebes, «while I weave the varied strains of song in honour of heroic spearmen» (86-87). In another ode for an Aeginetan victor the lyre (phorminx) is explicitly mentioned: «Weave out, weave out forthwith, sweet lyre, the web of lovely song with Lydian harmony...» (Nem., IV, 44-45). On these lines Farnell has a discerning observation: «The resemblance of the lyre to a loom makes the metaphor as natural as it is beautiful... cf. William Morris' 'Sigurd', 'the voice of hidden harps, as the hands of the music-weavers ran over the golden warps'.»[50]

The metaphor of music-weaving made a lasting impression on Ronsard. It is virtually certain that the Pindaric source was not the only one that contributed to the many passages in which the imagery of the loom and the lyre is found in his poetry.[51] There can be no doubt, however, that the first example of it is directly taken from the fourth Nemean, in which Ronsard saw at once, and forever retained, the beauty and the symbolism of poetic creativity that the image suggests. It is found toward the end of the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital* immediately after the verses in which Ronsard has denounced the ephemeral nature of the poetry of the «rimeurs de Court»:

> Ourdis, ô doulce Lyre mienne,
> Encor' un chant à cestui cy,[52]
> Qui met ta chorde Dorienne[53]
> Soubz le travail d'un doulx soucy.
> (III, 159)

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[48] Farnell, II, 233.

[49] *Op. cit.*, I, 151.

[50] *Op. cit.*, II, 267.

[51] See below, n. 57.

[52] L'Hospital.

[53] Ronsard pretends to substitute the graver Dorian for the soft and relaxed Lydian harmony of Nemean IV, 45, which would not have been appropriate here.

The image occurs again in the last lines of *Le Temple de Messeigneurs le Connestable, et des Chastillons* (1555) dedicated to Ronsard's benefactor Odet Cardinal de Chastillon. The poet has promised to build a marvellous temple for Anne de Montmorency and the Chastillon family and to establish in their honor an annual athletic festival «comme au lustre Olympique» (v. 9). He swears by the waters of Hippocrene and the Castalian spring (vv. 244-245) to send the praises of the Chastillons indefatigably «par les terres estranges» (v. 249), and concludes with a much fuller development than in the ode to l'Hospital of the image of the loom and lyre associated in his mind with the web of life and death woven by the Moirai:

> Car, soit que Lachesis de coupper n'ait envie
> Pour vingt ou pour trente ans la trame de ma vie,
> Ou soit qu'elle & ses Sœurs d'une cruelle main
> Tranchent bien tost le fil de mon mestier[54] humain,
> J'acheveray tousjours d'ourdir en ma pensée
> De l'oncle & des nepveux l'histoire commencée.[55]
> (VIII, 84)

There is another series of compositions addressed to Cassandre, Marie, and Hélène, in which the figure of the loom and lyre occurs with some frequency, though on one or two occasions only the loom is mentioned.

One of the loveliest sonnets of the *Amours* for Cassandre owes much of its sentiment and movement to Petrarch:

> Voyci le boys, que ma sainte Angelette
> Sus le printemps anime de son chant.

The tercets are especially touching — they express a tenderness in which the very essence of love seems to be distilled:

> Ici chanter, là pleurer je la vy,
> Ici soubrire,[56] & là je fus ravy
> De ses beaulx yeulx par lesquelz je desvie:
>
> Ici s'asseoir, là je la vi dancer:
> Sur le mestier d'un si vague penser
> Amour ourdit les trames de ma vie.
> (IV, 127-128)

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[54] «Prendre le mot 'mestier' au sens technique de machine à fabriquer des tissus.» Note by Laumonier.

[55] Cf. IX, 34, v. 87 and XIII, 22, v. 115 (variant of 1584-1587), where Charles Cardinal de Lorraine is the recipient of poems woven on the loom. In the *Chant pastoral, à Madame Marguerite, Duchesse de Savoye*, a shepherd (v. 33) weaves out a song on his bagpipe (v. 54, variant of 1584-1587).

[56] One is reminded of how Andromache smiled through her tears (*Iliad*, VI, 484) when Hector placed Astyanax in her arms and urged her to return to her loom and distaff.

In the *Commentary* that Muret prepared in 1553 for the second edition of the *Amours* he quotes (pp. 192-193) the tercets of the Petrarchan sonnet (inc. *Sennucio, i' vo' che sappi...*) to which Ronsard was unquestionably indebted, but they contain not the slightest suggestion of the image of the loom and lyre.[57] On the last two of Ronsard's verses, however, Muret has this note: «Mestier, ourdir, trame, sont mots prins des tisserans.»

The association of the loom with poetry, absent from the sonnet last quoted, reappears in 1554 in the *Elegie à Cassandre* (inc. *Mon œil, mon cœur...*) with an allusion to the god of love who weaves the threads of Ronsard's life. The elegy begins with an exultant cry that Henri II has finally commissioned the writing of the *Franciade*. But Ronsard informs Cassandre that there was a price to pay:

> ... ce grand Roi... ne veut plus soufrir
> Qu'à mes chansons ton nom se vienne ofrir (vv. 3-4).

Cassandre is, of course, desolated, and indeed the poet shares, to some extent, her despondency («Mais que me sert d'avoir tant leu Catulle», etc., v. 13). He consoles his disconsolate mistress:

> Que pleures tu, Cassandre, ma douce âme?
> Encor Amour ne veut couper la trame,
> Qu'en ta faveur je pandis au mestier,
> Sans achever l'ouvrage tout entier.
> Mon Roi n'a pas d'une Tygre sauvage
> Sucé le lait...
> (VI, 59)

One day the king will relent, for he too has felt «Le trait d'Amour qui surmonte les Rois» (v. 52).

The *Elegie à Marie* (inc. *Marie, à celle fin...*) was written some six years later, not without a certain economy of means, for Ronsard also apostrophizes his «belle angevine» as «Mon œil, mon cœur» (v. 16) and assures her that he exists to sing her praises:

> Or cela que je puis, pour vous je le veus faire:
> Je veus en vous chantant vos louanges parfaire,
> Et ne sentir jamais mon labeur engourdi
> Que tout l'ouvrage entier pour vous ne soit ourdi.
> (X, 239)

Like so many of the motifs that survived from the *Amours* and the two *Continuations des Amours* to be renewed in the *Sonets pour Helene*, the

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[57] Cordial thanks are due to Louis Terreaux, who pointed out in a communication dated 19 December 1961, that v. 14 of Ronsard's sonnet is related to one of Petrarch's (inc. *I' piansi, or canto...*), v. 6: Per accorciar del mio viver la tela.

theme of the loom of poetry underwent a great change in 1578. Ronsard accuses his last mistress of destroying his creative energy by the *farouche* quality of her resistance. He urges her, in a manner of speaking, not to be the excessively chaste Penelope of the web he is weaving to make her name immortal:

> Ne romps point au mestier par le milieu la trame,
> Qu'Amour en ton honneur m'a commandé d'ourdir:
> Ne laisses au travail mes poulces engourdir[58]
> Maintenant que l'ardeur à l'ouvrage m'enflame...
> (XVII, 243)

Alas, what was now true of Hélène had been equally true of Cassandre and Marie. Destiny had woven an identical fate for Ronsard in the springtime and in the autumn of his loves. He unites the names of all three ladies about a vestige of the theme of the loom of life:

> Adieu belle Cassandre, & vous belle Marie,
> Pour qui je fus trois ans en servage à Bourgueil:
> L'une vit, l'autre est morte, & ores de son œil
> Le ciel se resjouyst, dont la terre est marrie.
>
> Sur mon premier Avril, d'une amoureuse envie
> J'adoray voz beautez: mais vostre fier orgueil
> Ne s'amollit jamais pour larmes ny pour dueil,
> Tant d'une gauche main la Parque ourdit ma vie.
>
> Maintenant en Automne encore malheureux,
> Je vy comme au Printemps de nature amoureux
> Afin que tout mon âge aille au gré de la peine:
>
> Et ores que je deusse estre exempt du harnois,
> Mon Colonnel[59] m'envoye à grands coups de carquois
> R'assieger Ilion pour conquerir Heleine.
> (XVII, 255)

X. Preludial Imagery and the Gift of Immortality

«Over our work's beginning», Pindar said in the prelude to the sixth Olympian, «we must set a front that shines afar». From this principle he rarely departed. By their stirring movement, their color, their depth of feeling, the nobility of the subjects they introduce, and not least, by the variety

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[58] «Le tisserand se sert de ses deux pouces pour faire aller la navette de son métier. Cette image, qui compare la composition poétique au tissage, se trouve dans la cinquième [*read* quatrième] ode néméenne de Pindare, strophe 6...» Note by Laumonier.

[59] Amour.

and beauty of their imagery, Pindar's preludes are among the most attractive parts of his odes.

It is interesting that the proemial character and imagery of the sixth Olympian, which celebrates a victory in the mule chariot race, extend well beyond the first triad. Not until the beginning of the second strophe (22) does Pindar say to the charioteer, «Now, O Phintis, yoke the sturdy mules with all good speed, so that we may set our car [the ode] in the clear and open path of song... We must open for them the portals of song...» (27). These lines provided part of the prelude of Ronsard's ode *A Madame Marguerite*:

> Debout Muses, qu'on m'atelle
> Vostre charette[60] immortelle,
> Affin qu'errer je la face
> Par une nouvelle trace.[61]

But Ronsard's prelude does not end there. He is still advancing toward the substance of his poem at the beginning of the first epode:

> Sus mon Ame, ouvre la porte
> A tes vers[62] plus dous que miel,
> Affin qu'une fureur sorte
> Pour la ravir jusque au ciel...
> (I, 72, 73-74)

Thus two of the most essential elements of the proem of Pindar's ode — the harnessing of the chariot and the opening of the gates — visibly images of the rarecourse symbolizing poetic activity, are both present in the prelude of Ronsard's ode.

We have seen (Part I, Chap. XI, sec. viii) how, by a clever transposition which seemed to turn prelude into postlude, Ronsard in reality employed the opening of the sixth Olympian, with its image of a splendid façade, to create the overture of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes*. The image of the opening of the gates of song in the same prelude of the sixth Olympian provided the metaphor of the first quatrain of the *Sonet à son Livre*, which was originally the postlude of the *Amours* for Cassandre:

> Va Livre, va, deboucle la barriere,
> Lache la bride, & ne pallis de peur:
> Encependant que le chemin est seur,
> D'un cours certain empoudre la carriere:

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[60] Cf. Ol., VI, 22-24. For other references in Pindar to the chariot of the Muses, or to harnessing it, as images for beginning an ode, see Ol., IX, 81; Pyth., X, 65; Nem., I, 7; Isth., II, 2; VIII, 62.

[61] These verses undoubtedly owe much also to Ol., III, 4-6.

[62] Cf. Ol., VI, 27.

Va donq bientost, j'oy galloper derriere
De quatre ou cinq la suyvante roydeur,
Ja desja preste à devancer l'ardeur
Qui m'esperonne en ma cource premiere.

Bayf, Muret, Maclou, Bouguier, Tagaut,
Razant mes paz, leurs paz levent si hault
Par le sentier qui guide à la Memoyre,

Que maugré moy, honteusement boiteux,
Je feray place au tourbillon venteux
Qui tout le monde emplira de leur gloyre.[63]
(IV, 185-186)

For some reason — possibly its extremely competitive tone, the gratuitous mention of so many rivals by name, the graceless palinode of the second tercet — this sonnet was eliminated from the *Amours* between 1553 and 1560. In 1567 Ronsard appears to have recognized its intrinsically preludial character and placed it, chastened of its defects and raised to a level of genuine magnanimity, at the head of the *Elegies*, where it remained until 1578. When he was preparing the final collective editions, he had come to feel that in its revised form the sonnet of 1552 had acquired a grace, a dignity, and an epigraphic quality which indicated that its truest place was at the forefront of all his work.

Throughout all the changes that the sonnet underwent in more than thirty years, the Pindaric image of the opening of the gates of song to signal the beginning of the metaphoric chariot race remained unchanged. This is how the definitive version of the poem appeared in the editions of 1584 and 1587 as the πρόσωπον τηλαυγές, the far shining façace, of Ronsard's *Œuvres*:

Va Livre, va, desboucle la barriere,
Lasche la bride,[64] & asseure ta peur,
Ne doute point par un chemin si seur
D'un pied venteux em-poudrer la carriere:

Vole bien tost, j'entens desja derriere
De mes suivans l'envieuse roideur
Opiniastre à devancer l'ardeur
Qui me poussoit en ma course premiere.

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[63] Laumonier's comment (IV, 186, n. 1), «La métaphore de ce sonnet vient de Properce, III, i, vers 11-14», is true of the second quatrain and the tercets, not of the first quatrain.

[64] The expression «Lasche la bride» is a natural extension of the Pindaric image, though not present in the context paraphrased by Ronsard. Lines 5 and 8 of the princeps version seem to confirm the metaphor of the chariot race, but other verses, both in the original text and in the variants, leave the image clouded. Ronsard may have hesitated between the chariot and foot-race.

Mais non, arreste, & demeure en ton rang,
Bien que mon cœur bouillone d'un beau sang,
Fort de genoux, d'haleine encore bonne:

Livre cesson d'acquerir plus de bien,
Sans nous fascher si la belle couronne
Du Laurier serre autre front que le mien.
(*LL.*, I, p. iii; *S.*, I, 41)

When Pindar in 490 wrote in the first strophe of the sixth Pythian that he had built for Xenocrates, who had recently won the chariot race at Delphi, a «treasure-house of song», he was promising the victor an immortality more secure against the erosion of time than even the treasury of Delphi could provide for the statues of triumphant athletes.[65] Not many years later (485?) he celebrated in the fifth Nemean a victory of Pytheas of Aegina and returned in the first verses to the theme of the superiority of poetry over statuary: «No sculptor am I, that I should carve statues doomed to linger only on the pedestal where they stand. No! I would bid my sweet song speed from Aegina, in every argosy, and in every skiff...»

According to Pindar, then, poetry possesses a double pre-eminence, temporal and spatial, over both architecture and statuary. Its spiritual values defend it and its authors and recipients against time's eclipse, while its mobility assures its diffusion throughout the civilized universe.

The passages in Ronsard and in most poets of his day which proclaim that poetry alone is capable of conferring immortality are beyond number. «Ma plume vole au ciel», he said almost with his last breath. This was a thought that the reading of Pindar would certainly have strengthened, but not necessarily initiated in Ronsard's mind, for it came from every direction. The distinction drawn in the fifth Nemean between the arts of the statuary and the poet did, however, suggest the verses with which he introduced his ode A *René d'Urvoi*:

Je n'ai pas les mains apprises
Au métier muet de ceus,
Qui font une image assise
Sus des piliers paresseus.

Ma painture n'est pas mue[66]
Mais vive, & par l'univers
Guindée en l'air se remue
De sus l'engin de mes vers.
(II, 148-149)

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[65] Fränkel, p. 430, n. 9.

[66] «Note marginale des éditions de 1578 et de 1584: 'Mue, muete, vieil mot François'.» Note by Laumonier.

Pindar did not always repudiate the art of the sculptor, but even when he admitted its grace and its beauty, even when he described himself as a statuary, he was creating a metaphor of the immortalizing power of poetry. Two such passages are in no way proemial, but Ronsard found in them ideal themes for his own preludes.

In Nemean IV, 79-85, Pindar says to Timasarchus that he is making for his deceased uncle Callicles, an earlier victor in the Isthmian games, «a monument [stele] whiter than Parian stone, — for even as gold, when refined, is made to show all radiance, so doth song in honour of brave deeds make a man the peer of kings...» The eighth Nemean was composed for Deinias of Aegina who had won the double foot-race. Toward the end of the ode the poet addresses the departed spirit of Deinias' father who had also distinguished himself at the Nemean games (44-47): «To call thy soul, O Megas, to life again is, for me, impossible; of futile hopes the end is vain; but it is easy to raise a Muses' monument of song for thy clan...»

François de Carnavalet, as «premier écuyer de Henri II» (I, 29, n. 1), was engaged in activities not dissimilar from those of the contestants in the Great Games of Greece and was a trainer of the French youth in horsemanship. Passages in the odes of Pindar must have come readily to Ronsard's mind in eulogizing Carnavalet:

C'est un travail de bon heur
Chanter les hommes louables,
Et leur bastir un honneur
Seul vainqueur des ans muables.
Le marbre, ou l'airain vétu
D'un labeur vif par l'enclume,
N'animent pas la vertu
Comme je fai par ma plume...
(I, 91-92)

Charles Cardinal de Guise, the future Cardinal de Lorraine, could not perhaps boast of athletic prowess, but his descent from a princely family distinguished in the military annals of France gave Ronsard sufficient grounds for writing this prelude of the Pindaric ode *Au reverendissime cardinal de Guise*:

STROPHE I

Quand tu n'aurois autre grace
Ni autre present des cieus,
Que d'estre né de la race
De tant de Rois tes aieus,
Je trouveroi trop de lieus
Pour te bastir une gloire,
Car si je veil raconter
De ton grand Billon[67] l'histoire,

[67] «Godefroi, duc de Bouillon (dans l'ancienne Lorraine), l'un des chefs de la 1ère croisade, vainqueur des Turcs à Nicée [1097].» Note by Laumonier.

Qui peut les Turcs surmonter
Par une heureuse victoire,
Ou la fameuse memoire
De ses combas, ou les Rois
Desquels la riche Sicile
A leur obeir docile
Ecouta les saintes lois:

ANTISTROPHE

Leur vertu qui au ciel monte
Te feroit seule immortel,
Mais ta vergongneuse honte
Rougiroit d'un honneur tel.
Je te veil faire un autel
Où maugré l'an qui tout mange,
Ton propre los je peindrai
D'une encre qui ne se change,
Et là, ce veu je pendrai,
Qui au pelerin etrange
Racontera ta louange,
Et la vertu qui reluit
Par les ans de ta jeunesse,
Comme l'or sur la richesse,
Ou la Lune par la nuit.

(I, 79-81)

In reality it is not exact to describe these 30 verses as the prelude of an ode which contains only 49. But as Laumonier states (I, 81, n. 1), «cette ode semble être la préface» of the *Hymne de la Justice* dedicated to the Cardinal in 1555. As much as any other of Ronsard's compositions of this period, the present ode is the fulfillment of the program of lyric praise he had absorbed from his reading of Pindar: that it is the true object of the lyric poet to celebrate to the utmost the person whom he undertakes to eulogize, and if this is not possible, to seek out «quelqu'un de ses aieus, jadis braves, & vaillans» (I, 48). The «gloire» that Ronsard proposes to build (v. 6), and which is transformed into an «autel» (v. 20) in keeping with the prelate's ecclesiastical position, is reminiscent, without the funerary implications, of the monument of Parian marble of the fourth Nemean and of the Muses' monument of song of the eighth.[68]

Ronsard was thoroughly well acquainted with the odes Pindar had written for Hieron and Theron of Sicily. Evidence of this knowledge may be seen in more than three score passages of Ronsard's poetry, and is especially clear in relation to the first Pythian ode. In his analysis of that ode Farnell observes that Pindar «is justified in exalting the great victory of Himera, in which

[68] For additional Pindaric references see *POR*, pp. 72-73 and 129-130. See also I, 141, v. 47, «les piliers de memoire»; 168, v. 13, «Termes de memoire»; II, 83, v. 6, «Les colonnes de memoire».

Gelon, Hieron, and Theron defeated the Carthaginian host (480 B.C.), as no less momentous than the victories of Salamis and Plataea. And in telling phrase he commemorates the battle of Kumai (about 474), in which Hieron's fleet rescued the Greek city from the Etruscan attack and destroyed the Etruscan thalassocracy».[69] Gelon, Hieron, and Theron, all rulers in Sicily, were related by blood or marriage. It seems not improbable that Ronsard, in pursuance of the encomiastic principle which governed the Pindaric ode, mentioned the Angevin kings of Sicily (vv. 12-15), to whom the Guises were related (I, 80, n. 2), and the victory over the Turks of Godefroy de Bouillon (vv. 7-12), from whom the Guises claimed descent (V, 206, n. 1), in order to create as nearly perfect a parallelism as possible between the military allusions of the first Pythian for Hieron and those of his own ode for the Cardinal de Guise.

Among the many images that give distinction to the preludes of Pindar's odes, one of the earliest (490) is also one of the most beautiful and most significant. The metaphor in the prelude of the sixth Pythian of a Delphic treasure house of immortal song resisting the relentless onslaught of wintry storms «was no doubt suggested... by the vision of the actual θησαυροί erected on the way to the temple...»[70] This was the image which, in its Horatian variant (*Odes*, III, xxx), inspired the first verses of the poem *A sa Muse* with which Ronsard fittingly closed the fourth book of *Odes* in 1550[71]:

> Plus dur que fer, j'ai fini mon ouvrage,
> Que l'an dispost à demener les pas,
> Ne l'eau rongearde ou des freres la rage
> L'injuriant ne ruront point à bas...
> (II, 152)

What Bowra says of the Pindaric metaphor is equally true of its Horatian and Ronsardian versions: The song resembles «the treasure-houses on the steep and lofty ledge of Delphi... in containing its own treasure,[72] the wealth of Pindar's imaginative thought».[73]

In radiance and splendor few of Pindar's preludes surpass the overture of the sixth Olympian: «On golden pillars raising the fair-walled porch of our abode, we shall build, as it were, a splendid hall; even so, over our work's beginning we must set a front that shines afar.» This was the passage chosen

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[69] Farnell, I, 83.

[70] *Op. cit.*, II, 184.

[71] All three versions are discussed above, Part I, Chap. X, sec. ii.

[72] See below, n. 75.

[73] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 21; cf. Dornseiff, p. 57.

by Ronsard for the proem of a new ode *Au Roi*, non-Pindaric in form, which opens the second book of *Odes*:

> Je te veil bâtir une ode,[74]
> La maçonnant à la mode
> De tes palais honnorés,
> Qui voulontiers ont l'entrée
> De grands marbres acoutrée
> Et de haus piliers dorés,
>
> Affin que le frond de l'euvre
> Tout le bâtiment dequeuvre
> Etant richement vétu[75]:
> Ainsi (PRINCE) je veil mettre
> Au premier trait de mon mettre
> Ta louange & ta vertu.
>
> (I, 167)

In the golden pillars of the palace that Pindar builds Jacqueline Duchemin sees «les colonnes allégoriques [qui] sont les victoires déjà remportées», and in the palace itself, «ce palais de rêve», she sees «le château merveilleux où se consacre l'immortalité».[76] «Et la VI^e *Pythique*», she continues, «nous offre une description presque allégorique des éléments déchaînés essayant en vain de détruire le monument immortel, le 'Trésor des hymnes' offert au vainqueur delphique: 'Sur lui peuvent fondre avec furie les pluies d'hiver, milice impitoyable des nuées aux sourds grondements, et les vents peuvent venir le battre avec elles, de tous les débris confus qu'ils emportent, sans l'entraîner jusqu'aux abîmes de la mer.'»[77]

The profound conviction that inspires Pindar's words of having robbed time of its power to destroy was shared by the poet who wrote

> Exegi monumentum aere perennius...

and by the descendant of both, who, in verses touched by the same conviction and the same pride, sang of the immortality that he had won in its bestowal:

> Sous le tumbeau tout Ronsard n'ira pas
> Restant de lui la part qui est meilleure.
> Tousjours tousjours, sans que jamais je meure
> Je volerai tout vif par l'univers...
>
> (II, 152)

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[74] Cf. VIII, 72, vv. 1-10 and 73, ns. 1 and 2; VIII, 331, vv. 81-92.

[75] The 1587 variant of vv. 7-9: «Afin que le front de l'œuvre Du premier regard descœuvre Tous les tresors du dedans» (*S.*, III, 119), anticipates Bowra's description of the song as containing its own treasures, much as the Delphic treasure-houses did.

[76] Duchemin, pp. 258-259.

[77] *Op. cit.*, pp. 261-262. The last sentence is the translation by A. Puech of Pyth., VI, 10-14.

CHAPTER XIX

IMAGE, SYMBOL, IDEA (II)

I. Images of the Great Games and the «Tacit Metaphor»

One of the passages in Pindar that best describes the nature of the Greek athletic festival may be found in the tenth Olympian commemorating the victory of Hagesidamus in the boys' boxing match. It occurs immediately after a suggestion that the victor owes thanks to his trainer Ilas, and immediately before an account of the establishment by Heracles of the Olympian games and the sacred grove of Altis in honor of his father, Olympian Zeus: «If one be born with excellent gifts, then may another who sharpeneth his natural edge speed him, God helping, to an exceeding weight of glory. Very few have triumphed without toil. Of that light in the life of a man before all other deeds, that first of contests, the ordinances of Zeus have stirred me to sing» (20-24, tr. Myers).

A number of themes in these verses are characteristically Pindaric — as dominant in his attitude toward poetry as in his conception of the Games: the emphasis on the indispensability of innate excellence, together with the insistence that this does not suffice for great achievement without training and personal effort; the belief that what validates the achievement is the disinterested pursuit of glory; but above all, the deep conviction that a god presided at the foundation of the festival and still presides at each of its recurrences, a god whose presence is felt as a determining influence in all of the events associated with it. At Olympia and Nemea the god was Zeus, at Delphi Apollo, at the Isthmus Poseidon.[1]

Besides these Panhellenic festivals there were many local ones in Athens, Sparta, Argos, and elsewhere, but the one held at Olympia every fourth year was the greatest of all. «It was much more than an athletic meeting. It was the national religious festival of the whole Greek race. Olympia was the meeting-place of the Greek world.»[2] The recognition of this fundamental

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[1] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 162.

[2] Gardiner, p. 222.

interrelation between the human and divine aspects of the festival led Werner Jaeger to ask: «Who can understand... the athletic ideal evoked by Pindar's hymns of victory, without knowing the statues of the Olympic victors, which show us its physical incarnation, or the images of the gods that embody all the Greeks felt about the physical and spiritual perfection possible to man?»[3]

The imagery that the athletic competitions suggested to Pindar was of course drawn from the physical events themselves, and any study of them and of their reappearance in the poetry of his imitators must take cognizance of them as such. But underlying the poet's allusions to them was an irreducible sense of his function to magnify the exploits of the victor *sub specie divinitatis et aeternitatis*. «Le trait dominant dans l'ode pindarique, est... la certitude qu'a le poète de contribuer de façon efficace à l'immortalisation du vainqueur. Certes l'exploit existe d'abord; mais sans le poème, rien n'en demeurerait devant la postérité; l'athlète, livré à lui-même, serait à jamais, comme tout mortel, 'le rêve d'une ombre'. Cette faculté d'immortaliser l'homme est le privilège du poète agissant au nom des dieux...»[4]

The eighth Nemean was written for Deinias of Aegina who had won the double foot-race in 459 (?). In the second strophe of his ode (19) Pindar chooses an image suggested by the nature of the contest to describe his own poetic effort: «Lo! I am standing on feet lightly poised, taking breath before I speak.» This is not to imply that he deliberately sought to make his imagery conform to the type of athletic event he happened to be celebrating. Yet it is true, as Bowra has pointed out, that «When Pindar is presented with the challenge of composing a poem... he sees himself as an athlete poised before the moment of action». And Bowra gives an example taken from the fifth Nemean, 19-20:

> If my purpose is set to praise
> Wealth or strength of hands or iron-clad war,
> Dig a long pit for my jump from here;
> My knees can leap lightly.[5]

In his non-triadic ode *A Madame Marguerite* (inc. *Vierge, dont la vertu redore*) one finds a very energetic defense of the genuinely Hellenic characteristics of his poetry against his detractors who say «... que sur la Grecque trace Mon œuvre n'est point façonné» (III, 107, vv. 179-180). His defense consists of an exposition (vv. 181-270) of his knowledge of the athletic acti-

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[3] *Paideia*, I, p. xxvii.

[4] Duchemin, pp. 317-318.

[5] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 12; tr. Bowra. Pindar's ἐλαφρὸν ὁρμάν, «light spring», may have suggested Ronsard's «sautelant» (I, 113, v. 83).

vities associated with the Olympian games, «... comme cil qui ne s'egare Des vers repliez de Pindare» (vv. 184-185); he refers briefly, after the tenth and possibly the third Olympian odes, to the establishment of the Games by Heracles; he describes the eager competition among the athletes for the honor of winning the olive wreath of victory; he mentions the foot-race, boxing,[6] and wrestling; the throwing of the javelin and the discus[7]; the chariot-race[8] and the horse-race; and finally, the celebration of victory in poetry and music. From a number of these activities he drew images which did much to animate his early lyric poetry. He could not, of course, reproduce even an approximation of the athletic events which Pindar himself touched upon very lightly,[9] but he could and did adopt as the subjects of his poems the triumphs of his own contemporaries, though the contests he celebrates took place, more often than not, on a military or moral or intellectual, rather than a physical, plane. The epinicia of Ronsard glorify in Pindaric imagery the military victories of Henri II and François de Bourbon, the victory in a duel of Guy de Chabot, that of Madame Marguerite over «Le vilain monstre Ignorance», those of J.-A. de Baïf, Jean Dorat, Joachim du Bellay, and above all, of Michel de l'Hospital, whose united efforts, together with those of Ronsard himself, brought to birth a deeply enriched humanist poetics in France.[10]

In Ronsard's Pindaric ode to Du Bellay, for example, an image of the foot- or chariot-race is employed to describe the unfortunate poetic efforts of their hated Court rivals:

> Tousjours ils enfantent des vers
> Tortus, & courans de travers
> Parmi la carriere des Muses...
> (I, 111)

When in 1552 Ronsard wrote as an epilogue to the *Amours* the sonnet *Va livre, va, deboucle la barriere*, the imagery of the chariot-race portrayed his

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[6] The reference in v. 201 to «courgetz plombez» is apparently erroneous. «The use of metal to make the caestus haevier... was a purely Roman invention.» Gardiner, p. 198.

[7] In v. 208 Ronsard refers to the discus as «Un grand caillou». «... the word *diskos* meant originally nothing more than 'a thing for throwing'.» It could be a stone or a lump of metal. «The diskos that Odysseus threw at the Phaeacian games was a stone...», *op. cit.*, p. 154; and see illustration no. 23, facing p. 60, representing an athlete putting a stone (Etruscan bronze statuette, late 5th century, Museo Civico, Bologna).

[8] Ronsard accurately decribes the chariot-race as requiring twelve laps around the course, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-227. — Puech, I, 3-8, and Sandys, pp. xxii-xxx, give brief accounts of the Games.

[9] Fränkel, p. 494: «He treats the athletic contests with reference only to their significance; very seldom does he give details of a particular event.» Cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 165, who says that the poet «shows very few signs of enjoying them [the Games] for their own sake...»

[10] Cf. Vianey, p. 37.

personal efforts in contention with friendly rivals of his own poetic persuasion. He was reminded of this metaphor a decade later when he wrote in the *Hymne de l'Esté* for Fleurimont Robertet de Fresne lines which virtually repeated the theme of the epilogue of the *Amours*:

> Et veux comme l'Esté avoir l'estomaq chault
> Des chaleurs d'Apollon, courant par la carriere[11]
> Des Muses, & getter une obscure poussiere
> Aux yeus de mes suyvans...
> (XII, 36)

The ode that Pindar wrote for Timasarchus, who had won the boys' wrestling-match at Nemea, concludes with words of praise for Timasarchus' trainer Melesias. The words are placed in the mouth of the poet Euphanes, the deceased grandfather of Timasarchus, to whom Pindar ascribes language and imagery suggested by the art of wrestling: «Thus, were he to sound the praises of Melesias, he would grapple indeed in the strife, bending the words beneath his grasp, not budging an inch as he wrestleth in speech, — a gentle antagonist towards a noble adversary, but stern indeed when he waiteth to fight a froward foe» (Nem., IV, 93-96).

It was not until 1572, almost a quarter of a century after his Pindaric odes had been written, that Ronsard was apparently reminded of this metaphor when he composed a liminary madrigal for Remy Belleau's *Bergerie*:

> Voicy ce bon Luteur non jamais abatu,
> Qui pour ravir le prix compagnon de la peine,
> Des Muses champion se planta sur l'areine
> Et pour elles cent fois en France a combatu.
>
> Voicy celuy qui fut des premiers revestu
> Du harnois de Pallas, qui de nerfs & de veine
> Et de bras recourbez terrassa sur la plaine
> L'Ignorance & sacra son nom à la Vertu.
> (XV, 403)

In these verses the poet Belleau is easily recognizable as the second term of the metaphor in Pindar's ode; the vocabulary of the Games is audible in *Luteur*, *prix*, and *areine*, and especially in vv. 6 and 7, which reproduce the physical and psychological striving for excellence common to athlete and poet respectively in Pindar's lines; finally, the allusion in v. 8 to [le monstre] *Ignorance* must have been for Ronsard and Belleau a most exact transcription of the malignance of Pindar's παλίγκοτοι («adversaries») (v. 96).

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[11] Cf. III, 109, v. 199; X, 241, v. 76; XIII, 100, v. 492; XVII, 173, v. 189; XVIII, 292, v. 20.

The Games did not include a competition in archery,[12] and indeed, «Greek archery seems never to have been very good or efficient».[13] But Apollo, the god of the lyre, was also the god of the bow, as he had himself announced at his birth: «The lyre and the curved bow shall ever be dear to me, and I will declare to men the unfailing will of Zeus.»[14] The fusion of the images of the lyre and the bow that was initiated in the Homeric epics[15] was carried even futher by Pindar[16]: «But now, from the bow of the far-darting Muses, do thou shoot a shower of such shafts of song as these, at Zeus... and speed thou to Pytho also a winged arrow sweet, for not unto the ground shall fall the words thou shalt essay, while trilling the lyre...» (Ol., IX, 5-13).

In these verses Pindar addresses himself as the surrogate of the Muses and of their choragus Apollo. The prelude of the first Pythian, in which this relationship of the divinities of poetry and music is strikingly manifest, is an apostrophe to the lyre whose musical notes are arrows (12) sped from the golden strings. The metaphor of the arrow returns often in other odes in passages which convey some of Pindar's deepest convictions about his art and about the human condition. At the end of the first Olympian (111-114), when he wishes to leave with Hieron an admonition that there is a limit beyond which even a king may not pass, he says, «For myself, the Muse is keeping a shaft most mighty in strength... The crowning summit is for kings. Refrain from peering too far!» In a few words he states one of the fundamental principles of his own poetry, perhaps of all poetry that would transcend the banalities pleasing to the multitude: «Many a swift arrow have I... that is vocal to the wise; but for the crowd they need interpreters» (Ol., II, 83-86).[17]

Probably no Pindaric image was used more frequently by Ronsard than the metaphor of the bow and arrow of Apollo and the Muses representing the lyre and poetic thought. That he was himself aware of this is evident from the disdainful reference in the *Avertissement au Lecteur* of 1550 to those who criticized him for the frequent repetition in his poems of expressions like «l'arc de ma muse», and «un trait ailé» (I, 55). His lexicon of archery may be as rich as Pindar's: arc, carquois, fleche, sagette, trait, dard,

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[12] Gardiner, p. 27. — For Pindar's fondness for the javelin-throw as a metaphor for poetry and Ronsard's adoption of that image, see above, Part I, Chap. XI, sec. v.

[13] Charles Oman in Leonard Whibley's *A Companion to Greek Studies* (New York and London, 1963), p. 552.

[14] *Hom. Hymns*, III, 131-132, in Evelyn-White, p. 333.

[15] *Iliad*, IV, 125; *Od.*, XXI, 404-409; see *RGE*, pp. 279-280.

[16] «L'association est étroite entre l'évocation de l'arc et celle de la phorminx.» Duchemin, p. 25.

[17] The metaphor is continued to v. 91. See also Nem., VI, 27-29; Isth., II, 1-3; V, 46-48.

viser, guigner, bander, decocher, darder, bruire, sonner, voler, ailer, ruer, galoper [!], frapper, ficher, enfoncer, but, blanc.

Perhaps Ronsard's most conspicuous use of Pindar's images of archery — a close parallel of the passage in the second Olympian last quoted — occurs in the Pindaric ode *A Madame Marguerite*:

> J'ai sous l'esselle un carquois
> Gros de fleches nompareilles,
> Qui ne font bruire leurs vois
> Que pour les doctes oreilles:
> Leur roideur[18] n'est apparante
> A telle bande ignorante,
> Quand l'une d'elles annonce
> L'honneur que mon arc enfonce:
> Entre toutes j'elirai
> La[19] mieus sonnante, & de celle
> Par la terre universelle
> Ses vertus[20] je publirai.
>
> (I, 73)

Ronsard's purpose in including in his ode to Princess Marguerite the metaphor of the arrow developed in this particular manner is best understood in the light of Laumonier's comments on the poem, its *destinataire*, and the literary situation in 1549: «Je crois pouvoir dater de la deuxième moitié de 1549 la composition des odes où Ronsard remercie deux de ses protecteurs à la Cour, Madame Marguerite, sœur de Henri II, et Jacques Bouju, maître des requêtes de la reine. La princesse, très instruite, sachant le grec, le latin, l'italien, nourrie de Platon, de Cicéron, d'Horace, de Pétrarque, fit le plus grand cas de la nouvelle école poétique dès l'apparition de la *Deffence* et des premiers vers de Du Bellay et de Ronsard. Aux railleries et aux critiques des poètes qui, soit à la Cour, soit en province, représentaient encore l'école Marotique ou celle des Rhétoriqueurs, elle opposa une si vive résistance qu'elle arrêta le courant d'opinion hostile aux novateurs, et cela bien avant que la tactique de Mellin de Saint-Gelais l'eût forcée à intervenir auprès du roi lui-même en faveur de Ronsard.»[21]

Thus, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, Ronsard was not asserting in these verses a preference for hermetic poetry, which was foreign to his nature, but rather an effort to exploit to the utmost the intellectual and aesthetic resources which the rise of humanist studies had placed at the dis-

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[18] Force, impétuosité, rapidité. Huguet.

[19] Sc. *flèche*.

[20] Of Marguerite.

[21] *RPL*, p. 63. — On Bouju, «cet illustre inconnu», (*RPL*, p. 65), see Nicole Marzac-Holland, «Dames illustres qui ont esté Roynes. A hitherto lost set of poems by Jacques Bouju (1515-1577)», *BHR*, XLII (1980), 621-633.

posal of his generation. His writing was characterized by esoteric rather than hermetic qualities.[22] Had his readers generally been prepared by scholarly training, as Princess Marguerite was, and Jacques Bouju,[23] and Joachim du Bellay, and Michel de l'Hospital, and, it goes without saying, Jean Dorat, to follow where his poetry led, to seize the meaning and beauty of allusions that were necessarily mute for those who had not encountered them either in their original or borrowed texts, they would not have raised a hue and cry about his obscurity.

The arrows that sped from the strings of Ronsard's lyre sang more frequently for the «doctes oreilles» of Joachim du Bellay than for most other contemporaries. After several strophes devoted to the praise of various members of Joachim's distinguished family, Ronsard writes in a typically Pindaric poetic movement:

> Mais repren l'arc, Muse, il est tens
> Guigner au blanc où tu pretens...
> (I, 116)

Apollo (v. 175) urges him to sing the poetic achievements of Du Bellay:

> Obeissant à la vois sainte
> Mon trait par le ciel galopant
> L'air angevin n'ira coupant
> Sans que sa gloire en soit atainte...
> (I, 119)

In a second ode to Du Bellay, included like the other in the first book of *Odes*, Ronsard claims for his friend and himself the privilege of a sacerdotal relationship with the gods whose inspiration,

> Se laissant glisser dans nous
> Chatouille la poësie,
> Qui darde la fantasie
> De leurs prestres agités...
> (I, 145)

With the aid of the Graces, Ronsard says to Du Bellay in an ode of the third book,

> Je banderai mon arc qui jette
> Outre l'Ocean sa sagette
> Pour viser tout droit en ce lieu[24]
> Qui se rejouist de ta gloire...
> (II, 37)

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[22] See *RGTP*, pp. 344-353, «The Esoteric and the Intelligible».

[23] See *RPL*, pp. 64-65.

[24] Liré, Du Bellay's birthplace.

The military triumph of François de Bourbon, younger brother of Antoine de Bourbon, suzerain of la Possonnière, also brought from Ronsard's pen a shower of images associated with archery. The poet is himself a bowman who holds «L'arc des Muses bien peignées», and the poem is the arrow winged by victory (I, 84). The assimilation of archery and poetry is once more affirmed at the end of the second epode in a burst of hyperbolic eulogy that Ronsard normally reserved for members of the royal family:

> La France ne voit encore
> De nul Prince qu'elle honnore
> La gloire si bien emprainte
> Comme j'ai la tienne painte,
> Dardant le nom par mes vers
> De toi Prince, qui es dinne
> D'estre seigneur de mon hinne,
> Voire de tout l'univers.
>
> (I, 87)

The central portion of the ode to Michel de l'Hospital contains in three triads (16-18) an epitome of the history of poetry from earliest times to the Roman period. This universal vision of the civilizing activity of the Muses transcends the realm of poetry to include those of prophecy, religion, law, and ethics. It is introduced by an image derived from archery, but the bow (or the lyre) of the Muses, instead of metaphoric arrows, sends forth flames of inspiration:

> ... dardant leurs flammes subtiles,
> Du premier coup ont agité
> Le cuœur prophette des Sybilles,
> Epoinct de leur divinité:
> Si bien que leur langue comblée
> D'un son horriblement[25] obscur,
> Chantoit aux hommes le futur,
> D'une bouche toute troublée.
>
> (III, 148)

Toward the end of this immense ode, in verses which consummate the presentation of the poem to the Chancellor, it is the message of the ethical pre-eminence and wisdom of l'Hospital which Ronsard's hymnal arrow carries to the world:

> Puisse-je autant darder cest hynne
> Par l'air, d'un bras presumptueux,
> Comme il est sage, & vertueux,
> Et comme il est de mes vers digne.[26]
>
> (III, 159)

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[25] The variant of 1553-1587, *douteusement*, is more in keeping with the nature of the sibylline oracles, though somewhat redundant with *obscur*.

[26] For other examples of the image from archery to poetry see I, 62, 162, 170; III, 27, 161.

The most important of the contests in the Games was the chariot-race, and it is not surprising that Pindar, who had so often used the image of archery, which had no place in the athletic festivals, should have made of the chariot a metaphor of the ode. Mythology does not include the chariot among the attributes of the Muses,[27] but Pindar's imagination compensates for the omission, on at least one occasion, in conjunction with the metaphor of archery: «The men of old... who mounted the car of the golden-wreathed Muses, taking up the sounding lyre, lightly shot forth their honey-sweet songs in honour of their loves...» (Isth., II, 1-3). In the ninth Olympian (80-81), he prays that he «may find words to lead others and be fit to ride in the Muses' chariot».[28] In the second strophe of the sixth Olympian the metaphoric identity of the chariot of the Pierides and the ode is explicit.[29]

It is a curious fact that Ronsard, who made such copious use of the image of archery, a non-agonistic activity, employed almost not at all the metaphor of the chariot of the Muses, which is associated with the contest that dominated the Games. To the best of my knowledge its only unequivocal occurrence[30] is in the prelude of the Pindaric ode *A Madame Marguerite*, where the poet calls upon the Muses to have their chariot harnessed so that he may guide it by new paths of song unknown to «nos poëtes barbares» (I, 72).

Images of racing and boxing and wrestling, of javelins and arrows and chariots — each representing a moment of evanescent glory — «Why did great poetry apply itself to such ephemeral topics as victories in the field of sport?»[31] The answer is far more complex than the apparent simplicity of the question may suggest. It goes to the heart of Greek civilization and religion, as well as of the lyric poetry which was one of their highest manifestations. It involves an implicit metaphor, undoubtedly the greatest of all, yet never expressed, perhaps inexpressible, in the normal ways of imagery. Ronsard may not have been distinctly aware of its existence, though he surely knew three of the principal passages in Pindar from which the latent metaphor and the concept it embodies may be inferred.

The second Olympian ode for Theron, tyrant of Acragas, whose team of horses had won the chariot-race in 476, begins with an apostrophe to the triumphal ode: «Ye hymns that rule the lyre! what god, what hero, and

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[27] Duchemin, p. 257.

[28] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 12.

[29] Cf. Pyth., X, 65; Nem., I, 7; Isth., VIII, 62.

[30] Verses 1-2, 5, and 8 of the sonnet that forms the epilogue of the *Amours* of 1552 (IV, 185), may refer to the metaphor of the chariot.

[31] Fränkel, p. 434.

what man shall we loudly praise? Verily Zeus is the lord of Pisa; and Heracles established the Olympic festival, from the spoils of war; while Theron must be proclaimed by reason of his victorious chariot with its four horses...»

The sixth Nemean, possibly composed in 461, begins with one of Pindar's most deeply felt reflections on the relationship of gods and men[32]: «One is the race of men, one is the race of gods, and from one mother[33] do we both derive our breath; yet a power that is wholly sundered parteth us, in that the one is naught, while for the other the brazen heaven endureth as an abode unshaken for evermore. Nevertheless, we mortals have some likeness, either in might of mind or at least in our nature, to the immortals, although we know not by what course, whether by day, no nor yet in the night watches, fate hath ordained that we should run.»

Pindar's last triumphal ode, the eighth Pythian, gathers together these currents of thought and feeling which flow throughout his work into a supreme statement of the profound ambivalence of human existence: «Creatures of a day, what is man? what is he not? Man is but a dream of a shadow; but, when a gleam of sunshine cometh as a gift of heaven, a radiant light resteth on men, aye and a gentle life» (95-97).

Heracles, who is invoked together with his father Zeus in the second Olympian, was the most famous of Greek heroes, and a demigod by virtue of his divine paternity. He and the other heroes — Achilles, the Dioscuri, Ajax, Perseus, Pelops, Jason — established the pre-eminent ideal of strength, courage, and conduct against which the contestants in the Games were implicitly measured.

Thus, as John Finley has written in one of his most illuminating pages: «Nearly every poem of Pindar is a metaphor, the terms of which are the victor and the heroes. The likeness is never fully pressed, since to say openly that contemporaries resemble demigods touches impiety. Yet this metaphor is pervasive, not only because each community felt itself in its heroes, which were at once its past, its bond with divinity, and its moral and even physical exemplars, but because Pindar saw reality through such mythic means. As men, yet direct or remote offspring of gods, the heroes imply the gods, and a third dimension thus enters the metaphors. At one extreme, heavily involved in life, stand the victor, his family, his city... At the other extreme stand the gods, clear of time and struggle, radiant with a completion of which victory catches a momentary glint. The point where the two extremes meet is in the

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[32] Wilamowitz, p. 398 «... einen unvergesslichen Spruch über den Unterschied zwischen Göttern und Menschen und zugleich über ihre Verwandtschaft... Tieferes had Pindar nie gesagt». See Jean Pépin, *Idées grecques sur l'homme et sur Dieu* (1971), pp. 5-11.

[33] Gaia, Earth; cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 44-45; *Homeric Hymns*, XXX, 17.

moment when the gods' timelessness touches time and change. The heroes stand at this middle point exemplifying and expressing what the victory implies on both parts: on the part of men, effort, endurance, honor, all the high traits which the heroes themselves embodied... and on the part of gods, the touch of self-transcendence and unforeseen power, with which they had given final elevation to the lives of heroes and which was the sign of their acting in the world. The two terms of the recurrent theme are thus uncertainty, continuation, action, courage — involvement, that is, in time — and achievement, rest, vision, and (in its meaning to Pindar) harmony — escape from time. The one is process; the other, being. The heroes have a hold on both worlds. The immortal Muses sang of the dead Achilles, and after a life of labor Heracles [ἥρως θεός, 'hero-god', Nem., III, 22], in the splendid line of *I.*, 4, became 'a king of golden halls and Hera's son' (v. 66). The force of the tacit metaphor gives men too a hold on the second world of pure being, insofar at least as their acts reveal a self-transcendence like, if less than that revealed in the heroes.»[34]

Given the distance that separated ancient Greece from the European Renaissance, one might naturally assume that this metaphor of victors and heroes must have vanished almost completely from Ronsard's Pindaric odes. To a certain extent this is literally true, for the heroes, the essential second term of the metaphor, had virtually disappeared out of them. In the fifteen Pindaric odes published by Ronsard between 1550 and 1552 the names of only four Greek heroes can be found: Achilles, Cadmus, Adrastus, and Heracles — and none more than once. The names of many whose myths had added so much meaning to various odes of the poet of Thebes do not appear in Ronsard's Pindaric odes, though they occur more or less frequently in his later poetry.

The «chain of participation whereby heroes in their great moments share something of the gods, and men something of heroes... the chain which leads from men to heroes to gods»,[35] would thus appear to have been irremediably broken, and the possibility of self-transcendenc of protagonist or poet totally destroyed. This would surely have been the case if Ronsard had undertaken a servile imitation of Pindar. In fact, until the inevitable rejection of the Pindaric yoke in 1556, Ronsard's attitude generally was one of factitious surrender to the Theban infatuation, but not of servility. He had much to say within the context of his own experiences, emotions, reflections, ambitions, and ideals, and he uttered them in the accents of an extremely

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[34] Finley, pp. 40-41.

[35] *Op. cit.*, pp. 57, 58.

capable and sometimes deeply inspired poet. But it is undeniable to anyone «non passionné, & bien versé en la poësie» (XVI, 3), that the ambitions frequently suffocated the ideals. Whoever will read with judicious forbearance the series of Pindaric odes *Au Roi*, *A la Roine*, *A Madame Marguerite*, *Au reverendissime cardinal de Guise*, and those to François de Bourbon and even to Michel de l'Hospital, must admit that they were dictated by Ronsard's overweening ambition, contrasting strongly with the moderation and reserve of Pindar, to establish himself as the first poet of the French Court and, by the unrelenting promotion of his own work, especially the *Franciade*, to open the way to ecclesiastical preferment. Even the relatively disinterested Pindaric ode *A Jouachim du Bellai Angevin* is not entirely free of this blemish.

Yet the same attitude of judicious forbearance will not fail to recognize in Ronsard's poetry of this period a magnanimity and a contemplative power, whose literary sources may indeed have been in Pindar or in Horace, but whose human sources were entirely his own possession, his own creation. We are left with the mystery, if mystery it is, that the poet who could traffic his verses to Henri II «Troque pour troq'» (III, 33), was the same poet who could conclude an ode, immoderately encomiastic both of himself and of the Bourbon suzerains of la Possonnière, with a transcendent vision of the destinies of the gods and of men:

> Autour de la vie humaine
> Maint orage va volant,
> Qui ores le bien ameine
> Ores le mal violant:
> La face de la Fortune
> Ne se montre aus Rois toute une,
> Et jamais nul ne se treuve
> Qui jusque à la fin epreuve
> L'entiere felicité.
> Les hommes journaliers meurent,
> Les dieus seulement demeurent
> Exentés d'aversité.
>
> (I, 89)

II. The Imagery of the Sea

Greece is bathed on every side by the Mediterranean Sea. From earliest times many of the inhabitants, and especially those of the Aegean archipelago, had an islander's acquaintance with every aspect of the sea — its tempests and its halcyon serenities, the problems related to navigation, the value of an experienced pilot, an understanding of the limits beyond which it was dangerous to sail.

Though Pindar was not himself a man of the sea, his poetry was enriched by a marine vocabulary[36] which was the inheritance of every Greek, but which in the poet's mind was naturally turned toward symbolic ends. For the sea, «Elément capricieux et instable, tantôt amical, tantôt hostile... se prête par ses changements même à une grande diversité de symboles...»[37] Pindar was fond of the imagery of the sea, and as in the case of floral imagery and the imagery of honey, milk, wine, and nectar, «Le plus souvent, c'est son propre chant qui en est l'objet...»[38]

Thus, in the second Pythian ode to Hieron composed in honor of the tyrant's victory in the chariot-race, possibly at the Theban Iolaia, the poet says, «I shall ascend a prow that is crowned with flowers, while I sound the praise of valour» (62-63). In Ol., XIII, 49-52, celebrating the extraordinary feat of Xenophon of Corinth who had won the short foot-race and the pentathlon on the same day, Pindar writes: «I, in the fleet of the common joy, setting forth on a course of my own... shall, in the tale of heroic prowess, truly speak of Corinth.» In his earliest triumphal ode for Hippocleas of Thessaly, Pindar pretends at one moment that he has digressed from the subject and admonishes himself: «Now, stay thine oar, and swiftly let the anchor slip from the prow to grapple with the ground, and guard the ship against the rocky reef» (Pyth., X, 51-52).

Ronsard was not long in adopting the marine images of Pindar, sometimes together with their metaphoric assimilation to poetry, and even, on occasion, with a note of self-admonition so characteristic of the poet of Thebes. In the *Ode de la Paix*, for example, after the long digression serving as a mythical centerpiece in which he presents to Henri II a thumbnail sketch of the *Franciade*, he suddenly pretends that his prolixity might defeat his effort to obtain the desired subsidy for the writing of the projected epic. He turns to his wayward Muse, transformed for the purpose into a feminine mariner resting on her oars:

> Muse, repren l'aviron,
> Et racle la prochaine onde
> Qui nous baigne à l'environ
> Sans estre ainsi vagabonde.
> (III, 22)[39]

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[36] See Péron, pp. 341-342, «Index du vocabulaire maritime de Pindare». — The present section is greatly indebted to Jacques Péron's *Les Images maritimes de Pindare*.

[37] Péron, pp. 15-16.

[38] Duchemin, p. 256; Péron, p. 18.

[39] For similar metaphors equating ship and ode cf. I, 119; III, 22, 157; VIII, 164; XVIII, 319.

«La différence est sensible», between Pythian X and the present passage, as Laumonier correctly observes (III, 22, n. 2). But given the context in which Ronsard employs Pindar's image, the difference was inevitable.

The difference is perhaps essentially more perceptible between a passage of the first Pythian and the eighth epode of the *Ode de la Paix*. In the first Pythian (90-94) Pindar tactfully attempts to persuade Hieron that his renown in succeeding ages, his immortality, will depend on what poets have sung, and that this entails a certain expenditure: «If indeed thou delightest in hearing evermore what is sweet to hear, wax not over-weary in thy spending. Rather, like a steersman, suffer thy sail to be set free to catch the breeze... When men are dead and gone, it is only the loud acclaim of praise that surviveth mortals...»

Again Ronsard's anxiety to advance his fortunes and those of the *Franciade* bring about a transformation comparable to the one we have just witnessed:

> C'est à toi Roi, d'honorer
> Les vers, & les decorer
> Des presens de ta hautesse,
> Pousse ma nef, je serai
> Des premiers qui passerai
> Mes compagnons de vitesse.
>
> Strophe 9
>
> Plus tost que les feus ne s'elancent
> Quand au ciel les foudres nous tancent
> Je courrai dire aus estrangers,
> Combien l'effort de ta main destre
> Maniant le fer, est adestre
> A briser l'horreur des dangers...
> (III, 29-30)

For Pindar, the metaphors are those of a ship belonging to Hieron and piloted by him. They constitute a diplomatic lesson in royal generosity, and even more, in the conduct of a princely life. For Ronsard, the metaphor is an image of the successful literary career the young poet hopes to embark upon, and a renewed expression of his desire for material encouragement in the writing of the proposed epic. «Pousse ma nef»,[40] he says — *his* ship, not Henri's. Yet in this case that is not the essential difference. It is one of tone, discretion, and sensitivity. Pindar knows instinctively how to address a monarch. There were moments when Ronsard, too, was able to do so with courtly reserve, but this is surely not one of them.

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[40] Cf. VI, 121, vv. 21-28, where Ronsard urges O. de Magny not to despair of obtaining a favor he seeks from Henir II, since he can count on Jean d'Avanson, «Qui ja pousse ta nef...»

The word *nef* became in Ronsard's mind a symbol for his career. For many years he erroneously equated that career with the launching of the *Franciade*. This began in 1550 with the *Ode de la Paix* dedicated to Henri II. It continued with the ode *Au Roy* of 1555, in which the poet says to the king, «Aussi tu porterois la honte sur les yeus», if you allow Francus, your ancestor, to languish in Epirus, «car ouvrier je suis prest De charpenter sa nef» (VII, 10). It was renewed in the same year in another ode *Au Roy* which complains that he is immobilized because without royal favor the *Franciade* lies becalmed:

> Ainsi, Prince, je suis sans bouger, atendant
> Que ta sainte faveur aille un jour commandant
> A ma nef, d'entreprendre un chemin honorable
> Du costé que ton vent lui sera favorable.
> (VII, 24)

That favorable wind never arose in the lifetime of Henri II, but on the accession of Charles IX the sails of the *Franciade* finally began to swell. After the obligatory invocation to the Muse, the epic gets under way with a second invocation to the king:

> CHARLES MON PRINCE, enflez moy le courage,
> En vostre honneur j'entrepren cet ouvrage,
> Soyez mon guide, & garder d'abismer
> Ma nef qui flotte en si profonde mer.
> (XVI, 30)

The passage in the first Pythian from which Ronsard drew this metaphor compares Hieron to a steersman (91). This was a renewal of an image that Pindar had employed earlier in the same ode when he admonished Hieron[41] to «Steer thy people with the helm of justice, and forge thy tongue on the anvil of truth!» (86). «Lebensregeln gibt er, wie Chiron dem Achilleus[42]... aber sie sind nicht allgemein menschlich oder doch für die Gesellschaft berechnet, welcher auch der Lehrer angehört, sondern eröffnen sozusagen die Reihe der Schriften περὶ βασιλείας...»[43]

Ronsard, who had opened the *Ode de la Paix* with very courageous words of admonition to Henri II (III, 3-4) inspired by Pindar, was not likely to overlook the words of grave advice that the Theban poet had offered to the Syracusan king. In the ninth strophe of the ode to Peace, however, it is

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[41] Wilamowitz, p. 303, believes that these words are addressed to Deinomenes, the son of Hieron; this is controverted by Farnell, II, 116, and ignored by Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 268. Whether Pindar had in mind the father or the son is not, however, material to the point made here.

[42] See Nem., III, 43 ff.

[43] Willamowitz, p. 303.

inserted not so much as a word of counsel, but as one in a series of compliments directed to the French king: «I shall announce abroad how thy mighty right hand skillfully destroys horrible dangers»,

> Et de quel soin prudent & caut
> Ton peuple justement tu guides...

And Ronsard is inspired to proclaim that the Fates had ordained

> Qu'un si grand Prince seroit né
> Pour gouverner comme un bon pere
> La France heureusement prospere
> Par les effaits de sa vertu.
> (III, 30)

Though compliment, rather than admonition, served Ronsard's purpose in the context of this effort to persuade Henri II to become the Maecenas of the *Franciade*, it is true that passages of this kind, and particularly the proem of the *Ode de la Paix*, may be said to have initiated the poet's writings on kingly rule.[44]

The most important of these was the *Institution pour l'adolescence du Roy Charles neufviesme* composed in 1561 long after Ronsard had lost interest in using Pindar as a frequent model. From time to time, nevertheless, Pindaric reminiscences continue to appear many years after the early fascination with the triumphal odes had abated. To the young Charles IX Ronsard offers advice in which the voice of Pindar is perhaps even more clearly heard than in the *Ode de la Paix*:

> Si un pilote faut, tant soit peu, sur la mer,
> Il fera desoubs l'eau la navire abismer.
> Aussi faillant un Roy tant soit peu, la province
> Se perd, car volontiers le peuple suit son prince.
> (XI, 9)

The metaphor «Roy-pilote» clearly reflects Ronsard's reading of the first Pythian where he had encountered the words κυβερνάτας ἀνήρ (91), conveying for him, as for Pindar, the symbolism of an aristocratic political ideal.[45] «La 1ère *Pythique* a été composée à l'occasion de la fondation par Hiéron de la ville d'Etna: la cité nouvelle est ici présentée comme un navire qui amorce une traversée, et par là s'explique l'insistance des exhortations que Pindare adresse à son 'pilote'.»[46]

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[44] It may be opportune to recall that according to A. de Rochambeau, *La Famille de Ronsart* (1868), p. 33, citing Jean Bouchet, Loys Ronsart, the poet's father, was the author of a treatise on «le gouvernement des princes».

[45] See Péron, pp. 104 ff., «Le 'roi-pilote', le 'vaisseau de la cité'».

[46] Péron, p. 111.

For Charles IX, too, ascending the throne at the age of eleven, the moment represented the «amorce d'une traversée», and for France the perilous beginning of the reign of a boy-king destined to preside over one of the most tragic periods of French history. Inevitably Ronsard remembered the counsel Pindar had given to Hieron, counsel of which the young Charles stood in far greater need.[47]

The second Pythian begins, like so many of Pindar's odes, with a brilliant prelude: «Mighty city of Syracuse! holy ground of Ares, that is ever plunged in war! thou nursing-place divine of heroes and steeds that rejoice in steel! I come from splendid Thebes, and I bring a song that telleth of the race of the four-horse chariot that shaketh the earth, — that race in which Hieron was victorious with his glorious team...»

One would suppose that Pindar was going to Syracuse to deliver his ode in person to Hieron, a supposition that seems to find confirmation when he adds (62), «I shall ascend a prow that is crowned with flowers...» In reality, the poet's voyage is completely symbolical.[48] «Pindar... boards the herald-ship all dight with flowers to proclaim [Hieron's] achievements... But as we gaze, the herald-ship becomes a merchant-ship (67), and the song is the freight...»[49] For the poet says, «This song I am sending you, like Phoenician merchandise, across the white-flecked sea» (67-68).

The metaphorical allusion to merchandise reminds us that Pindar's poems, like those of his contemporaries and predecessors, were often commissioned and paid for by his wealthy patrons.[50] «Pindar makes no bones about referring to the payment that he expects for his poems[51]...» His acceptance of a fee did not compromise his probity or subvert his good taste. But Ronsard, his mind full of the imagery that Pindar had employed in addressing the second Pythian to Hieron, says to Henri II at the end of the *Ode de la Paix*:

> Prince, je t'envoie cette Ode,
> Trafiquant mes vers à la mode
> Que le marchant baille son bien,
> Troque pour troq'[52]: toi qui es riche,

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[47] In 1573, the year preceding the death of Charles IX, Ronsard wrote another poem to the king expressing his despair at the course events had taken. The advice to the «roi-pilote» had been to no avail: «Le François estrangé Son Prince ne gouverne...» (XVIII, 405). See also XVIII, 5, vv. 85-88, addressed in 1577 to Henri III.

[48] Péron, p. 151.

[49] Gildersleeve, p. 254.

[50] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 355-358; Norwood, pp. 16, 20, 29, 155-157.

[51] Fränkel, p. 432.

[52] According to Amadis Jamyn, this was not the only occasion upon which Ronsard used this expression, though it does not occur again in his poetry. In an autograph letter dated

Toi roi de biens, ne soit point chiche
De changer ton present au mien.
Ne te lasse point de donner,
Et tu verras comme j'acorde
L'honneur que je promai sonner
Quant un present dore ma corde.
(III, 33-34)

Though Pindar was able to say to Hieron, «Wax not over-weary in thy spending» (Pyth., I, 90), there is a vast difference between the moderate tone he adopts and the language of insistent solicitation that we encounter thus early, and throughout most of his life, in Ronsard.

Altogether different was the style he had adopted, probably well before the composition of the *Ode de la Paix*, in dedicating an ode to an individual occupying an ordinary station in life, his fellow-poet Bertrand Berger. He had not yet written the preface of the *Odes* of 1550 in which he would mention with obvious approbation «quelle somme d'argent ils [the Greek lyric poets] prenoient pour louer les hommes» (I, 46), and would state that «ma boutique n'est chargée d'autres drogues que de louanges, & d'honneurs» (I, 48). With an air of supreme disinterestedness which is not entirely convincing, he completely reverses what he took to be Pindar's thought while retaining the metaphorical vocabulary of commerce in the second Pythian:

La mercerie que je porte
Bertran, est bien d'une autre sorte
Que celle que l'usurier vand
Dedans ses boutiques avares,
Ou les marchandises barbares
Qui enflent l'orgueil du Levant.

Ma douce navire immortelle
Ne se charge de drogue telle,
Et telle de moi tu n'attens,
Ou si tu l'attens tu t'abuses:
Je suis le trafiqueur des Muses,
Et de leurs biens, maistres du tens.

Leur marchandise ne s'étalle
En foire, en marché, ni en halle:
Aussi la vendre il n'est permis,
Pour l'argent ell' ne s'abandonne,
D'une main large je la donne
A qui me plaist de mes amis.
(I, 138-139)

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11 mars 1587 (Bibl. nat., *Cinq-Cents Colbert*, 472, p. 267), Amadis Jamyn writes to Monsieur de Mauvissiere: «... comme vous avze souvent ouÿ dire à Feu Monsieur de Ronsard votre grand Amy que quelquefois les Muses aimant à trafiquer leur marchandize troqz pour troqz, desirent quelque plaisir de ceux ausquels elles veulent faire service...» The letter is reproduced in full by Theodosia Graur, *Un disciple de Ronsard: Amadis Jamyn*, pp. 339-340.

This was written between 1545 and 1549. In 1585, the year of his death, he wrote for Claude Binet, soon to become one of his literary executors, the *Hymne de Mercure*, the divinity of commerce whose name is derived from the Latin *merx*, merchandise. The tone changes, as well it might after so many years and in those final days. The pretense of disinterestedness has vanished, and what remains are the simple words of a great poet still using the thought and the imagery of a great predecessor to express an ideal that he would have wished to make a permanent possession:

> Binet soin d'Apollon, dont la vive eloquence
> Flate mon mal d'espoir, mon procez d'asseurance,
> Au lieu de tes beaux vers, du trafic de nostre art,[53]
> Des honneurs de Mercure icy je te fay part:
> Voila quel est le fruit de nostre marchandise,
> Qui au seul prix d'honneur se vend, s'eschange, & prise.
> (XVIII, 274)

The metaphor that identifies «marchandise» and poetry («the song is the freight», as Gildersleeve said), goes back to Ronsard's beginnings. He had known then the value of the merchandise he was able to offer to the great and the less great of the world, but with the passage of time and increase of experience, the knowledge deepened to understanding. «Pindare, que les considérations quotidiennes et matérielles intéressent peu, n'en a pas moins employé... l'image de la cargaison, mais avec des intentions très particulières: pour évoquer le prix qu'il attache à ses odes.»[54] Ronsard, who as an impecunious younger son was obliged for his own survival to be much concerned with «les considérations quotidiennes et matérielles», struggled against them all his life; yielded often to them, not without anguish, under the constraint of necessity; but understood more and more surely that great poetry was to be prized «au seul prix d'honneur».

At the beginning of Hesiod's *Works and Days* (24-26) there are wise words on the advantages of a creative rivalry: «This Strife is wholesome for men. And potter is angry with potter, and craftsman with craftsman, and beggar is jealous of beggar, and minstrel of minstrel.» Ronsard had translated this passage for the prelude of his Pindaric ode *A Bouju Angevin* at a time when the theme of rivalry among poets was of intense immediate interest to him owing to his effort to establish the new poetry in the face of the opposition of the so-called Marotiques:

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[53] *Vie*, pp. xviii-xx, reproduces verses by Binet addressed to Ronsard and refers to the lawsuit in which Binet served as counsel to the poet. See also XVIII, 493-495, Ronsard's letter *A Messieurs Le Maire et les Eschevins de cette ville de Tours* for details of the lawsuit.

[54] Péron, p. 151.

Le potier hait le potier,
Le feuvre, le charpentier,
Le Poëte tout ainsi
Hait celui qui l'est aussi
(Comme dit la vois sucrée
Du bon citoyen d'Ascrée)...
(I, 121-122)

Fifteen years later in the *Art poëtique* he quotes Hesiod's Greek when he urges special vigilance in the writing of Alexandrines, which, he says, are turned into rhymed prose by feeble contemporary poets. He declines to name them because «je desire eviter l'impudence de telle maniere de gens: car... non seulement κεράμευς κεράμει [*sic*] κοτέει, καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων, mais aussi ἀοιδὸς ἀοιδῷ» (XIV, 25).

Pindar had made personal acquaintance with this all too human problem. He was deeply concerned over envious assaults upon his poetry, however and by whom motivated. The image he employs on one occasion is that of a man struggling in the sea against powerful undercurrents, the more dangerous for being hidden. With unshakeable conviction of his superiority he says, «We shall yet be deemed to come forth in the light of day far stronger than our foes, while another, with envious glance, broodeth in darkness over some fruitless purpose that falleth to the ground» (Nem., IV, 36-41).[55] When he suspected that he had been slandered to Hieron, he once more asserted his invincibility, again in a marine image: «Stealthy purveyors of slander are an equal curse to those who listen and to those who are slandered; they are absolutely like foxes in their impulses. But what does the cunning fox really gain by his cunning? For, while, when the rest of the tackle has the fisherman's bait in the depth of the sea, I, like a cork above the net, float undipped in the brine» (Pyth., II, 76-80).

It is not difficult to imagine the moral comfort and psychological support Ronsard must have derived, at the height of his troubles with the slanders of Saint-Gelais, and at the moment of composing his ode of gratitude to Michel de l'Hospital, when he discovered in Pindar two passages which corresponded so perfectly to his own situation. He brought them together triumphantly in the twenty-first epode of his poem to l'Hospital:

Hâte-toi donc de plyer
Ta chanson trop poursuivie,
De peur (Muse) que l'Envie
N'ait matiere de crier,
Laquelle veult abysmer
Noz noms au fond de la Mer

[55] Norwood, pp. 178-179: «It is at least plain that an attack had been levelled against his poetry... and... that the 'other man' is a poet, or poets.»

Par sa langue sacrilege:
Plus elle nous veult plonger,
Plus elle nous faict nager
Hault dessus l'eau comme un liege.[56]
(III, 157-158)

In the sixth Olympian honoring Hagesias of Syracuse for his victory in the mule chariot-race in 468 Pindar prays for the prosperity of Hieron and urges the monarch (99) to welcome Hagesias «from one home to another [οἴκοθεν οἴκαδε], even from the walls of Stymphalus» to those of Syracuse. Pindar adds (100-101): «In the stormy night it is well that two anchors be let down from out the swift ship.» Hagesias was a citizen of Syracuse, member of a family of early settlers of Sicily,[57] but his «impopularité auprès du peuple était notoire».[58] He was also a citizen of Stymphalus in Arcadia, whence his maternal stock was derived, and where he seems to have been in greater favor than in Sicily. It was for that reason that Pindar's ode was sung first in Arcadia, though it was repeated at Syracuse.[59] When Hagesias returned to Sicily he went in reality «from one home to another», for he «unites in his person Syracusan and Stymphalian».[60] The political situation in Syracuse was uncertain in these last years of Hieron's reign, a fact of which Pindar was probably aware.[61] Hieron died in 466 and Hagesias, a supporter of the tyrant, «a péri la même année au cours des émeutes qui ont accompagné le changement de règne[62]...» The double citizenship of Hagesias and his return to a politically unstable Syracuse are the circumstances which must have prompted Pindar to employ the image of the double anchor, an image of «provident security».[63] The anchors, says Gildersleeve (p. 181), after Paley, were dropped, «On either side of the prow. Starboard and port, not fore and aft».

Ronsard may not have known all the circumstances surrounding the life of Hagesias, but he was able from his reading of the sixth Olympian to see certain resemblances with the life of François de Carnavalet. In the Pindaric ode dedicated to him we read:

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[56] In 1560 Ronsard again made use of this Pindaric image; see X, 10, vv. 111-118.

[57] Gildersleeve, p. 171.

[58] Péron, p. 63.

[59] Gildersleeve, p. 171.

[60] *Op. cit.*, pp. 171-172.

[61] Péron, p. 63.

[62] *Loc. cit.*

[63] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 264. Cf. Péron, p. 59: «... une seule ancre symbolise un salut précaire, les deux ancres sont devenues l'image... d'un appui... sûr.»

Tes vieus aieus maternels
Et tes oncles paternels
Divers champs ont habité:
Mais toi seul qui leur succedes
Des deus tu tiens & possedes
Les biens qu'ils ont herité.
Quand la bize vient facher
La proue qu'el' soufle & vire,
Alors il fait bon lacher
Deux ancres de son navire.
La France te va louant
Pour son fils, & la Bretaigne[64]
De t'aller sien avouant
Si grand honneur ne dedainge...
(I, 96-97)

That «provident security» which Carnavalet obtained in inheritance from maternal and paternal stocks and from being able to move οἴκοθεν οἴκαδε between Bretagne and France, Ronsard sought in his relations with some of the most powerful men at Court. In 1556 he dedicated an *Epistre... à tresillustre prince Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine* in which he recalls a moment of great personal insecurity when he stood in the courtyard of the Château d'Anet waiting for the Cardinal and trembling like a cypress or pine after the woodcutters have given it the final stroke:

Qui fait ores semblant de tomber à senestre,
Ores tout au rebours de tomber à la dextre,
Ores de tous les deux...
(VIII, 339)

Just then the Cardinal emerged from the Château:

A vous je m'adressay, & si tost je ne sceu
Vous flechir le genouil que je ne fuz receu
D'un œil doux & benin: secours vous me promittes,
Et tost vostre promesse à bonne fin vous mittes,
Obtenant de mon Roy tout sur l'heure le bien
Que je voulois avoir par vostre seul moyen,
Parlant aussi pour moy Monsieur le Conestable,[65]
Car, comme dit Pindare, une Nef sur le sable
D'une ancre tient assez, mais en temps orageux
Quand elle est sur la mer, il luy en fault bien deux.
(VIII, 340; cf. VI, 232; VII, 158)

[64] It is curious to see how in Ronsard's time the unification of certain provinces under the crown was still sufficiently recent to make it possible for him to think of Bretagne and France as distinct entities. That mentality is still very much alive.

[65] Anne de Montmorency.

III. Gold, Fire, Light, and the Heavenly Bodies

If one reads the odes of Pindar, «ce grand visuel», as he has been called,[66] in the traditional order, the passage one encounters at the very beginning is the brilliant prelude of the first Olympian for Hieron: «Even as water is most excellent, while gold, like fire flaming at night, gleameth more brightly than all other lordly wealth; even so, fond heart, if thou wouldst tell of prizes won in the games, look not by day for any star in the lonely sky, that shineth with warmth more genial than the sun, nor let us think to praise a place of festival more glorious than Olympia, whence cometh the famous song of praise that enfoldeth the thoughts of poets, to sing the son of Cronus when they arrive at the rich and happy hearth of Hieron.»

Pindar, says Croiset, «aime les mots qui expriment l'éclat, qui donnent une sensation lumineuse. Le verbe φλέγειν, par exemple, qui signifie *enflammer*, et par suite *éclairer*, *illuminer*, est sans cesse employé par lui d'une manière métaphorique pour exprimer le reflet d'honneur que les vertus, les Grâces, les Muses, les chants des poètes peuvent jeter sur un vainqueur».[67]

The succession of things mentioned by Pindar — water, gold, the sun — in an ascending order of radiance, is intended to symbolize the supremacy of the Olympian games as the most distinguished of Greek athletic festivals, and thus enhance the glory of Hieron's victory.[68] But Pindar's thought does not stop with Hieron or the Games. «The sun», John Finley reminds us, «stands in relation to the Olympian games and these in turn to Zeus, since it is to Zeus that poets' minds turn in contemplation of Olympia».[69]

In her article, «Essai sur le symbolisme pindarique: or, lumière et couleurs»,[70] later developed in a chapter of her *Pindare, poète et prophète*, Jacqueline Duchemin's conclusions anticipated those of Finley on the divine significance of the light that blazes in the prelude of the first Olympian: «Aux mots évoquant la lumière et l'éclat, il faut joindre tous ceux qui désignent des attributs divins ou des objets venant des dieux.» She adds that «Les épithètes de nature formées sur χρυσός [gold] sont si fréquentes chez

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[66] Duchemin, p. 196.

[67] Croiset, p. 395; cf. Dorothy Tarrant, «Greek Metaphors of Light», *Classical Quarterly*, N.S. X (1960), 182 for several of Pindar's most characteristic words expressing various forms of the metaphor «as applied to the radiant distinction or fame of a person or object». See also Gildersleeve, p. xxxvi, and Duchemin, p. 194.

[68] Fränkel, p. 471.

[69] Finley, p. 52.

[70] *Revue des études grecques*, LXV (1952), 46-58.

Pindare[71] qu'on en vient, comme chez Homère,[72] à ne plus les remarquer».[73] She believes, on the contrary, that their frequency ought to induce us to pay more rather than less attention to them.

She rejects any translation of the opening verses of the first Olympian which would suggest that Pindar esteemed gold for its material value.[74] The context, which brings «gold, like fire flaming at night», into immediate parallelism with the sun, eliminates such a narrow interpretation. For Pindar gold is a brilliance superior to wealth, «il le lui préfère».[75] Nor do his descriptions of gold and the sun, and his use of colors like purple, saffron, and white, represent a striving for picturesque effects. «La préoccupation du pittoresque est, en tous ces exemples, largement dépassée. L'inspiration se fait ici de plus en plus purement religieuse. De même que les couleurs de pourpre et de safran comportent une valeur rituelle, de même la blancheur lumineuse introduit le poème dans un climat sacré. Il en est de même de l'or et de la lumière.»[76]

For Jacqueline Duchemin, who, after a detailed study of data of the remotest antiquity, as well as of passages in Greek literature beginning with Homer,[77] returns to the prelude of the first Olympian, «l'évocation de l'or y annonce celle du soleil... et nous ne croirons pas excessif de penser que la mention de l'or a pour lui, sans conteste, une valeur mystique».[78] Man attributed exceptional power to gold because he found in it «l'éclatant reflet du Soleil et de la Lumière», and because «à l'idée de la Lumière s'associe invinciblement celle de la Gloire[79]... principe de vie, cette vie que répand aussi le Soleil, vu sous l'aspect d'une grande divinité fécondante».[80]

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[71] Cf. Gildersleeve's comment, p. 188, on the seventh Olympian: «The poem is full of gold, vv. 4, 32, 34, 50, 64.»

[72] See *RGE*, pp. 300-301 and Ronsard's *Hymne de l'Or*, VIII, 192, vv. 295-316, and p. 193, n. 2 and 3.

[73] Duchemin, p. 194.

[74] She releases Pindar «du reproche de vénalité lancé de tous côtés, bien à la légère» (p. 195), as did Croiset, p. 236, and Farnell, II, 363.

[75] Duchemin, p. 195.

[76] *Op. cit.*, p. 200; cf. H.L. Lorimer, «Gold and Ivory in Greek Mythology», in *Greek Poetry and Life: Essays Presented to Gilbert Murray on his Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford, 1936), p. 24, «... the origin of divine epithets compounded with χρυσός is to be sought in cult-images and votive offerings...»

[77] Duchemin, pp. 203-217.

[78] *Op. cit.*, p. 217.

[79] Cf. Bowra, *Pindar,* p. 87, who notes that in the prelude of the first Olympian, «Gold is a symbol for celestial brightness and lasting glory». See also Finley, p. 292, n. 30.

[80] Duchemin, pp. 218-219.

Quite apart from its association with the sacred light of the sun — «the flash of gold», says Finley (p. 48), «Pindar's most constant single mark for the divine», — the metal possesses for the poet another divine aspect owing to its incorruptibility. One of the fragments is unmistakably clear: «Gold is a child of Zeus; neither moth nor worm devoureth it.»[81] From this it is but a step to the notion that Apollo gives «A ses serviteurs fidèles... en gage de protection... le feuillage du laurier d'or, qui les garantit contre les forces de destruction. Peut-être même devons-nous penser que le don du laurier d'or équivaut à celui de l'immortalité bienheureuse au pays d'Apollon».[82]

It is, of course, improbable that Pindar was consciously aware that his sacral use of luminous colors and the flashing luster of gold originated in «des sources perdues aux profondeurs des siècles».[83] As for Ronsard, at so great a distance from the author who inspired many of his early odes, and at so immense a remove from the prehistoric origins of these mystic concepts, it is surprising that so much of their substance and their sacral meaning survived to find a place in his poetry. It would be erroneous, I think, to suppose that this occurred merely as an inevitable accident of imitation, though this did have some influence. Man does not easily surrender what once had a profound and primal significance for him.

The first French ode composed by Ronsard, *A son Luc*, was probably written between 1541 and 1543,[84] several years before the commencement of his Greek studies. It begins with an apostrophe to his golden lute. He could not possibly have known that Pindar had preceded him in this by two millennia.

> Si autrefois sous l'ombre de Gâtine
> Avons joué quelque chanson Latine
> D'Amarille enamouré,
> Sus, maintenant Luc doré...
> (II, 155-156)

As Laumonier states in a note, this is an imitation of Horace (*Odes*, I, xxxii, 1-4), who, in *Ad Lyram*, had apostrophized the instrument, but had not called it golden.[85] Toward the end of the decade that witnessed Ronsard's initiation into poetry, he again addressed his golden lute in the first four verses of *L'Hymne de France*, this time in Pindaric tones taken from the first Pythian:

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[81] Sandys, frag. 222, p. 612.

[82] Duchemin, p. 226.

[83] *Op. cit.*, pp. 205, 210.

[84] See II, 155, n. 2, end.

[85] As he does in *Odes*, IV, iii, 17.

Sus luc doré,[86] des Muses le partaige,
Et d'Apollon le commun heritaige,
De qui la voix, d'accord melodieux,
Chante le loz des hommes & des dieux.
(I, 24)

Though Ronsard was precluded by the abyss of historical and cultural differences that separated France and ancient Greece from a genuine understanding of Pindar's use of gold as «the most constant single mark for the divine», the word itself, probably reduced in status to providing colorful or picturesque effects,[87] was ineradicable from his poetry. The golden Graces inhabit Ronsard's Vendômois; the honeyed praise of the Muses is better than gold; as they prepare to visit their father Zeus, the Muses intertwine a wreath of violets in their golden hair; Apollo bathes his «poil doré» in the Loir; terrestrial poets owe their existence to «Apollin aux crins dorez».[88]

Long before the beginning of his attraction to Pindar, Ronsard wrote in *A son Luc*:

La poësie est un feu consumant
Par grand ardeur l'esprit de son amant,
Esprit que jamais ne laisse
En repos tant elle presse.
(II, 158)

He could not have known at that time how important a place the theme of fire had in Pindar's poetry and was to have in his own, but he had already learned the invincible power that poetry exercised over her worshippers. He was to learn also that the inspiring flame of poetry burned most brightly, perhaps, when it burned for others.

It was fundamental to Pindar's conception of his art that «If a man is honoured with the right kind of song, his consciousness is quickened and his personal experience enriched. Pindar's imagery of fire conveys the new kind of life which success and song bring to his victors and through which they enter an almost new existence».[89] Strepsiades of Thebes, winner in the pancratium, «is on flame with the violet-haired Muses» (Isth., VII, 23), and «the fair-haired Graces set on fire» Carrhotus, the charioteer who won the

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[86] Cf. I, 178, v. 77; II, 39, v. 66.

[87] This process may already have begun in antiquity. See Duchemin, p. 202, who quotes a passage from Bacchylides which seems to indicate «surtout une prédilection pour un pittoresque brillant».

[88] I, 224; II, 36; III, 122; I, 230, III, 208, etc. One might add Ronsard's frequent allusions to the Golden Age to which Elizabeth Armstrong has devoted an excellent study, *Ronsard and the Age of Gold*, (Cambridge, Eng., 1968).

[89] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 34.

race at Delphi for Arcesilas of Cyrene (Pyth., V, 45).[90] The Graces are divinities of joy and flowering and light, and the name of one of them, Aglaia, is a synonym for radiance and glory.[91]

In his sixth Pindaric ode Ronsard pauses to ask which of the accomplishments of Carnavalet he ought to celebrate first:

> Quelle louange premiere
> T'ardera par l'univers,
> Flamboiant en la lumiere[92]
> Que degorgeront mes vers[93]?
> (I, 92)

To Henri II he says in the *Ode de la Paix*:

> Tu as eteint tout l'ennui
> Des guerres injurieuses,
> Faisant flamber aujourd'hui
> Tes graces victorieuses...
> (III, 25; cf. 34, vv. 483-486)

In addition to their function as the guardians and communicants of heroic and divine deeds, the Muses have another which is indissociable from the first: «par la bouche du poète, elles préparent actuellement l'immortalité future de ceux qu'il chante. L'œuvre de Pindare est pleine de ce souci et de cette fierté de conférer l'immortalité[94]...» The imagery of fire, and radiance, and glory was inseparably related in Pindar's mind with this role of the Muses. In the fourth Isthmian for his townsman Melissus he writes: «Whatsoever one hath well said goeth forth with a voice that never dieth; and thus, over the fruitful earth and athwart the sea, hath passed the light [ἀχτίς, flashing brilliance] of noble deeds unquenchable forever. O may we win the favour of the Muses that, for Melissus also, we may kindle the torch of song...» (41-44).

The image of the sun flaring like a torch is employed by Ronsard to express the brilliance of Montmorency's reappearance at the Court of France, by grace of Henri II, after the long exile of 1540 to 1547:

> Mais tout ainsi que les flambeaux
> Ou du soleil, ou d'une etoille
> Tout soudain treluisent plus beaux
> Apres qu'ils ont brisé leur voile,

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[90] *Op. et loc. cit.*, tr. Bowra.

[91] Duchemin, p. 93.

[92] Cf. Pyth., V, 45; Nem., VI, 38-39; X, 2. See *POR*, p. 128, the reference to p. 67, v. 38 of vol. I of Laumonier's critical edition.

[93] See *POR*, p. 131, the reference to p. 92, v. 44.

[94] Duchemin, p. 41.

Ainsi apres ton long sejour
Tu nous éclaires d'un beau jour...
(III, 28; cf. I, 132-133)

As for the verses composed by Ronsard and Du Bellay under the inspiration of the Muse, the fire of immortality burns in them as it burns in gold «flaming at night»:

... ni les ans,
Ni l'audace des vens nuisans,
Ni la dent des pluies qui mord,
Ne donne aus vers doctes la mort:
Par eus la Parque est devancée,
Ils ardent l'eternelle nuit,
Tousjours fleurissans par le fruit
Que la Muse ente en leur pensée...
(I, 112)

In the *Iliad* (XVIII, 187 ff.), before Achilles has received from Hephaestus the divine armor which would permit him to enter the battle, he is reassured by Athena who throws her aegis about his shoulders, «and around his head the fair goddess set thick a golden cloud, and forth from the man made blaze a gleaming fire... even so from the head of Achilles went up the gleam toward heaven».[95] On this passage J. Duchemin observes that «le nimbe de lumière est la marque tangible d'une présence et d'une assistance divines». On a similar passage concerning Hector (*Iliad* XV, 623), she adds: «La protection des dieux se matérialise en lumière.»[96] What was true of the epic heroes was more than ever true of the leader of the Muses. In the *Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo* (201-203), we read that Apollo, playing the lyre in a gathering of the gods on Olympus, shone in radiant light, and flashes gleamed from his feet and finely-woven tunic.[97]

From Homer, from certain phases of Greek religious life, and from his consciousness of Greek values, Pindar must have acquired the conviction of this truth that the protection of the gods is manifested in light. He was equally convinced that the divine gift of poetry has the power to dissipate the darkness that would otherwise shroud noble actions: «Now there is a saying among men», he writes in the ninth Nemean, «that it is not meet that a deed nobly done should be buried silently in the ground, and a lay divine of verse is well fitted for loud acclaim» (6-7). And in the second Olympian: «Praise is attacked by envy... that is ever eager to darken the fair deeds of noble men» (95-98).

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[95] A.T. Murray, ed. and tr., *Homer: The Iliad* (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1946), pp. 303-305.

[96] Duchemin, pp. 204, 205.

[97] Evelyn-White, p. 339.

In 1544, in the *Epistre envoyée par Clement Marot à Monsieur d'Anguyen*, the poet promised François de Bourbon an epic in which the young conqueror of the Imperial army of Charles-Quint would be «Nostre Achiles, & Marot son Homere».[98] A year or two later, Ronsard, in an aggressively competitive Pindaric ode on *La victoire de François de Bourbon, Conte d'Anguien*, asserted, not without grandiloquence, that Marot's poem did not suffice to «eternizer» (v. 4) the glory of the prince. He, the poet of Vendôme, the «ouvrier ingenieus» (v. 10) who had mastered Pindar's style and thought, who held in his hand «L'arc des Muses bien peignées» (v. 14), knew that

> Jamais la Muse ne soufre
> Qu'un silence soumeillant
> En ses tenebres engoufre
> Les faits d'un homme vaillant.
> (I, 87)

The general theme is the same, but the tone very different, in two odes *A Joachim du Bellai Angevin* which Ronsard wrote between 1547 and 1549:

> D'une nuit oblivieuse
> Pour quoi tes vers caches-tu?[99]
> La lumiere est envieuse
> S'on lui céle la vertu...
> (II, 66)

> Mais ma plume qui conjecture
> Par son vol sa gloire future,
> Se vante de n'endurer pas
> Que la tienne en l'obscur demeure...
> (II, 36)

These passages in the first and second odes to Du Bellay, both non-triadic in structure, foreshadowed the verses Ronsard was to address to his friend in a third ode, fully Pindaric in form and largely Pindaric in substance, in which the protection of the gods is revealed in light:

> Puis que sa louange foisonne
> En cent vertus propres à lui,
> A quoi par les honneurs d'autrui[100]
> Rempli-je ce que je lui donne?
> Sa gloire sufit pour borner
> Les vers qui le veulent orner.
> O bons dieus on ne sçauroit faire
> Que la vertu se puisse taire

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[98] C.A. Mayer, ed., *Clément Marot: Les Epîtres* (London, 1964²), pp. 278-279.

[99] Ronsard here urges Du Bellay to publish his *Olive*; see II, 66, n. 2.

[100] Distinguished members of Du Bellay's family whose praises occupy some of the preceding strophes; see I, 113, n. 2.

Bien qu'on brule de l'obscurcir:
Maugré l'envie el' se rend forte,
Et sur le front la lampe porte
Qui seule la peut eclarcir.
(I, 116-117)

The family of Melissus of Thebes had met with tragic misfortune when four of its men had perished in one day at the battle of Plataea in 479 B.C. Not long afterward, the triumph of Melissus in the pancratium at Nemea gave Pindar the occasion to write that the fame of the victor's family «was fallen on sleep, but now she is roused again with beaming form, like the star of morning ['Αωσφόρος],[101] a sight to see amid the other stars» (Isth., IV, 22-24).

It is possible that Ronsard had this passage in mind when in the *Hymne de France*, composed at the end of 1549, he described Henri II as a

Roy dont l'honneur sur les autres reluit,
Ainsi que l'astre à Venus, qui la nuit
De son beau front tous les autres efface...
(I, 34)

In a note on the passage in which these lines occur, Laumonier says, «Ces quatorze vers, de 201 à 214 (sauf la comparaison avec l'astre), s'inspirent... de Virgile, *Géorg.*, II, 167-172».

A comparison, apparently with the same star, is found in the Pindaric ode to Catherine de Médicis, *A la Roine*, written a year or two before the *Hymne de France*:

... l'honneur de tes aieus
Va flamboiant comme aus cieus
Flamboie l'Aurore claire,
Et l'honneur de ton Julien[102]
Qui par l'air Italien
Comme une planete eclaire...
(I, 67)

The morning star is not specifically mentioned, but the close proximity of «Aurore» and «planete» leaves little doubt that Ronsard was thinking of Pindar's 'Αωσφόρος. The same image is found a third time in the Pindaric ode *A Madame Marguerite*, sister of Henri II, whose merit

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[101] Identical with Venus, called Lucifer as the morning star and Hesperus as the evening star.

[102] «Julien [de Médicis], frère de Laurent.» Note by Laumonier. — On the word «flamboiant» Laumonier's personal copy of vol. I of the critical edition has the following marginal note in his hand: «Pind. φλέγειν = enflammer, par suite illustrer, sans cesse employé pour exprimer le reflet d'honneur que les vertus, ou les Muses peuvent jeter sur un vainqueur. De même le mot διαιθύσσειν = jaillir en étincelant (lat. emicare).» Cf. III, 34, n. 2.

... luit comme une planette
Ardante la nuit brunette.
(I, 77)

The third Olympian, in which Pindar blends «the varied melody of the lyre, and the air played on the flutes, with the setting of the verses» (8-9) narrates how Heracles had returned from the Hyperboreans with the gift of the olive tree to shade the spectators in the sanctuary of Zeus (18). It was midmonth and «the Moon with her car of gold had at eventide kindled before him the full orb of her light...» (19-20). Ronsard's second ode *A Madame Marguerite* contains a description of a typical victory celebration at the scene of the festival, together with an account of the contribution of poets and musicians, «Le mestier des premiers harpeurs», to the common joy:

Lesquelz, au soir par l'asemblée,
Quant l'œil de la lune doublée[103]
Ardoit le voile obscur des cieux,
Avec les flustes doulxsonnantes,
Et les trompettes hault parlantes
Louengeoyent les victorieux.
(III, 110)

Evidently Ronsard had found the scene as described by Pindar very attractive. His own version of it is not without charm, in spite of his curious treatment of the image of the eye of the moon and the substitution of trumpets for the lyre. The allusion to the awakening of the «mestier des harpeurs» as a means of perpetuating the memory of the accomplishments of the victors, though not present in this passage of the third Olympian, is nevertheless a distinctively Pindaric reiteration, most congenial to Ronsard's own convictions, of the poet's power to immortalize great achievements.

A final example in Ronsard of the imagery of the sun brings us full circle to the point of departure of the present section. The opening verses of the first Olympian proclaim that only the excellence of water over the other elements, or the brilliance of the sun outshining «any star in the lonely sky», can begin to suggest the degree to which the festival at Olympia surpasses all the others. In the Pindaric ode to Du Bellay, after the passage in which Ronsard affirms that no power is capable of concealing his friend's many excellences («vertus»), the fourth antistrophe continues:

Les tiennes ont tant de valeur
Qu'encores s'on cachoit la leur,
Sous le silence elle croistroit
Et plus sa flamme apparoistroit:

[103] For Ronsard's apparent misunderstanding of the passage see Part I, Chap. IX, n. 44.

Car tout ainsi que la mer passe
L'honneur d'un chaq'un élément,
Et le souleil semblablement
Les moindres feus du ciel éface,
Ainsi apparoissent les traits
Dont tu émailles les portraits
De la riche peinture tienne
Tant semblable au vif de la mienne...
(I, 117)

It would probably be an error to think that the last verse has an invidious intention. Such an inference is disproved by the immediate context and by the rest of the ode, which, if understood as but one element in the fabric of literary relationships that united Ronsard and Du Bellay at this time, will be seen as an affirmation of their joint effort to introduce the Pindaric ode into French literature.[104]

IV. The Lyre, Symbol of Universal Harmony

The first Pythian ode was ostensibly composed to celebrate the victory of Hieron of Syracuse in the chariot-race at Delphi in 470. In reality, however, it was intended to commemorate the establishment by Hieron of the city of Aetna in 476 after the violent expulsion of the Ionian inhabitants of Catana,[105] who were for the Dorian tyrant «un ferment de révolte»,[106] and their replacement by Dorian settlers from Syracuse and the Peloponnesus. The aging and ailing ruler, anxious to secure the continuity of his dynasty, installed his young son Deinomenes as king of Aetna under the regency of Chromius, brother-in-law of Hieron.[107] Besides, the tyrant coveted the honor of being the founder of a city whose name would forever be linked to his own. The first Pythian was accordingly inscribed «For Hieron of Aetna», rather than «For Hieron of Syracuse», the inscription of the first Olympian and the second and third Pythians.

Given the manner of the city's creation, which assured it and Hieron the hatred of the expelled Ionian residents; given also the fact that from the beginning it was a police state controlled by means of a system of internal espionage, «On comprend... combien fragiles étaient les fondements de la ville d'Etna[108]...»

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[104] This point of view was advanced in my article on the Pindaric collaboration of the two poets; see above, Chap. XVIII, n. 25.

[105] Wilamowitz, p. 296.

[106] Méautis, p. 151.

[107] *Op. et loc. cit.*

[108] *Op. cit.*, p, 153.

Pindar was surely aware of these circumstances, which must have strengthened his «lurking doubt about the security of order in everything having to do with the tyrant[109]...» Nevertheless, it was his obligation, once he had accepted the commission, to write an ode in praise of his patron and to glorify his creation of the new city. A number of factors concurred to produce a setting for Pindar's ode calculated to enlarge his vision and intensify his poetic faculties beyond anything he had known before. As a Dorian himself, he was not indifferent to the fact that Aetna was a Dorian city under the protection of a Dorian constitution, to which Pindar specifically refers (61-65). Aetna lay at the foot of the volcano from which it took its name — the mighty incandescent cone whose eruption the poet describes in shattering and coruscating[110] language. The volcanic activity became in Pindar's mind the symbol of universal anarchy, which Greek mythology, sculpture, and poetry represented under the form of the rebellion of the Giants against the celestial order. In the first Pythian the most terrifying of the Giants, Typhon, the monster of a hundred serpent heads, cast by Zeus into Tartarus, is the symbolic malevolent spirit who feeds the fires of Aetna. What Pindar most wished to place before Hieron, whose city had been founded under such precarious conditions, was a countervailing symbol of the «conquête de l'ordre, de la stabilité, de l'harmonie dont les dieux étaient à la fois les exemples et les garants»,[111] a symbol that in the words of Bowra's definition of the term in *The Greek Experience* (pp. 111-112), would express «in a concrete, particular shape... a transcendental order of being... [and] convey the quality of divine intervention in... human society». It was both miraculous and inevitable that the poet-musician would find that symbol of universal harmony in the lyre: «O golden lyre, rightful possession of Apollo and the violet-wreathed Muses! whom the dancer's footstep hears as it begins the triumphal festival; whose notes the singers obey whenever with trembling strings you strike up the prelude of the choir-leading overture!

«You quench the warring thunderbolt of everlasting flame; and the eagle, king of birds, sleeps on the sceptre of Zeus, drooping his swift wings on either side. You shed a dark mist over his curved head, gentle seal of eyelids. As he slumbers, his supple back rises and falls beneath the spell of your throbbing tones. For even violent Ares, forgetting his harsh and pointed spears, warms his heart in repose. Your shafts enchant the minds even of the gods through the wisdom of Leto's son and the deep-zoned Muses.

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[109] Finley, p. 82.

[110] The felicitous adjective is Finley's, p. 81.

[111] Méautis, p. 154.

«But all the beings that Zeus has not loved are terrified when they hear the voice of the Pierides, whether on earth or on the restless sea — even he who lies in the horrors of Tartarus, the enemy of the gods, Typhon of the hundred heads, whom once the renowned Cilician cave bred, though now the sea-girt cliffs above Cyme, and Sicily too, lie heavy on his shaggy breast. The column that soars to heaven holds him fast, snowy Aetna, year-long nurse of biting frost, from whose inmost caves erupt springs of unapproachable fire. In the day-time her rivers pour out a glowing stream of smoke, but in the darkness of night a red rolling flame carries rocks with crashing din to the deep-sea plain. That monster flings aloft dreadful fountains of fire, a wondrous marvel to behold, a wonder even to hear from those who have seen. Such a being is he that lies shackled between the dark-leaved heights of Aetna and the plain, while all his out-stretched back is goaded by his craggy couch.

»Grant, O Zeus, grant that we may be plesing to you...»[112]

The significance of the symbolism of the lyre as the instrument whose music casts a peaceful spell even upon the god of war and strikes terror into the hearts of those anarchic monsters «that Zeus has not loved», is brought to fulfillment in Pindar's prayer to the god of heaven. «Thus at the outset», wrote Gilbert Norwood, «Zeus and the other gods are proclaimed lovers of the Lyre, his enemies as its enemies — creatures of disharmony and chaos: at once it has grown into all that Plato meant by μουσική, and more — the spirit of serenity, order, concord throughout the Universe opposing and holding in subjection whatever makes for turbulence, jarring discord, the disruption of all. Then the poet with magical dexterity swings into the orbit of this cosmic thought today's human festival.»[113]

«All that Plato meant by μουσική, and more», that is to say, philosphy, which he described in *Phaedo* 61 as the μεγίστη μουσική, «the noblest and best of music», capable of inciting men to strive for a rational inner harmony of the soul. That is the vision and the hope that Pindar presents to Hieron at the end of the ode when he returns, with the figures of the ruthless Phalaris and the kindly Croesus, to the contrast between barbarism and «civilization as the world's music»,[114] a vision and a hope renewed in the second Pythian (72), when the poet urges the prince in words reminiscent of the Delphic oracle, γένοι' οἷος ἐσσὶ μαθών, «be what you have learned that you are».[115]

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[112] This translation, basically that of Sandys, is also indebted to those of other scholars and to Slater's *Lexicon to Pindar*.

[113] Norwood, p. 102.

[114] *Op. cit.*, pp. 104-105.

[115] Slater, s. vv. γίνομαι, μανθάνω.

For Pindar the lyre was thus an intellectual symbol of profoundest significance. The prelude of the first Pythian reveals how thoroughly his concept of the nature of music was interpenetrated with immensely meaningful moral considerations. But in the entire passage there is hardly one abstract word. Everything is set forth in images that spring up spontaneously to add beauty and depth to whatever realm of abstraction the «mighty thought»[116] of the poet is entering — indeed, to express, to be the thought itself.

In his reflections on the impossibility of distinguishing exactly between an image and a symbol, John Finley observes that «symbols seem to bear a heavier weight of meaning and to exist proportionately less for purposes of objective description... The emphasis of symbols is more intellectual. Though they do not break the sensory bond with life but express the mind's categories through the involvement of the senses, they yet chiefly convey meaning and significance».[117] After isolating the intellectual element in symbolic thought, he analyzes the distinction between concept and symbol. «Conceptual thought...» he says, «is the search for categories behind the sensuous play of images, for rational simplification underlying apparent variety. The term symbolic thought is less clear. It too seeks order and simplification, but not by evading the play of image which instead of being a source of confusion and hindrance is the very language by which it speaks and even sees.»[118]

These considerations reveal in Pindar intellectual tendencies that strike root in images but emerge in symbols having the substance and force of concepts, though lacking their abstract form — «ein ständiges Schweben auf der Kippe zwischen Bild und Begriff...» «Pindar steht genau an dem Punkt in der griechischen Geistesentwicklung, wo sich Bild- und Gedankenerlebnis die Wage hält.»[119]

Pindar's strong inclination toward symbolism does not, however, signify, as Gilbert Norwood would have us believe, that the poet was committed to the creation for each ode of a symbol that should determine its meaning and structure.[120] He was opposed to anything that resembled an *esprit de système*, which for him would have been the death of the spirit. Nevertheless, many

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[116] Norwood, p. 102.

[117] Finley, p. 9.

[118] *Op. cit.*, p. 11.

[119] Dornseiff, pp. 66, 72.

[120] Norwood finds, for example (pp. 100-106), that the symbol of Ol., XIV is Moving Waters, of Ol., XII a sailing Ship, of Isth., VII a War-horse, etc.

readers of Pindar would agree with Norwood's description of the first Pythian as «the most instantly cogent example of Pindaric symbolism».[121]

One of those readers was surely Ronsard, who experienced as a poet the sublimity of Pindar's ode and adopted much of its symbolism in the overture of *A sa lire*, for which he reserved a place of great distinction at the end of the first book of *Odes*. Far more than the meager prelude of the *Hymne de France*, the proem of *A sa lire* enters deeply and with sensitive understanding into the full significance of the opening verses of Pindar's great ode:

> Lire dorée, où Phebus seulement,
> Et les neuf seurs ont part egalement,
> Le seul confort qui mes tristesses tue,
> Que la dance oit, & toute s'evertue
> De t'obeir, & mesurer ses pas
> Sous tes fredons mignardés par compas,
> Lors qu'en bruiant tu merques la cadanse
> D'un avantjeu, le guide de la danse.
>
> Le feu armé de Jupiter s'eteint
> Sous ta chanson, si ta chanson l'atteint:
> Et au caquet de tes cordes bien jointes
> Son aigle dort sur sa foudre à trois pointes
> Abaissant l'aile, adonc tu vas charmant
> Ses yeus agus, & lui en les fermant
> Son dos herisse, & ses plumes repousse
> Flaté du son de ta parole douce.
>
> Celui n'est pas le bien aimé des Dieus
> A qui deplaist ton chant melodieus...
> (I, 162-163)

In spite of the great resemblances between the preludes of the two odes, the similarity does not extend further. Music as the symbol of universal harmony and the rejection of brutish disorder dominates the whole of Pindar's ode and not alone the apostrophe to the lyre and the verses on the terrible fate of Typhon. The panegyric of Hieron for his victories against the Carthaginians and the Etruscans celebrates his success in establishing peace and concord in Sicily; the passage devoted to the founding of the city of Aetna leads Pindar to utter the hope that harmony will prevail between Syracuse and the new city; at the end, the advice to Hieron, not less earnest for being expressed with great discretion, is an encouragement to enlightened and benevolent statesmanship that will make Hieron a theme for grateful song.

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[121] Norwood, p. 101; his magnificent interpretation of the first Pythian extends to p. 105.

«The Lyre is named at the close, as at the outset, joined now to youthful human song that breathes peace and friendship.»[122]

Ronsard's ode, like so much of the poetry he published in 1550, was not dictated by such disinterested considerations, but by the exigencies of his personal situation among the writers at the Court of France. The prelude of *A sa lire* retains the substance and symbolism of the corresponding verses of the first Pythian, but it exists in Ronsard's ode for a different reason: to magnify his achievement in raising French lyric poetry to a level of spiritual value and formal excellence which it had often lacked in recent years. After the apostrophe to the lyre, he deplores the wretched condition in which he had found it at his first coming; describes how he had restored it to the status it had enjoyed in antiquity; and rejoices that his renown had grown throughout France so that «avec le doi par la rue on le montre» (v. 68). At the end, like Pindar, he returns to the lyre, but again with an essential difference:

> Si de mon front les étoilles je passe,
> Certes mon Luc cela vient de ta grace.
> (I, 166)

The names of Typhon and Aetna are absent from *A sa lire*, but the monstrous creature has left a tacit presence in the verses

> Celui n'est pas le bien aimé des Dieus
> A qui deplaist ton chant melodieus...

which paraphrase Pindar's allusion to «all the beings that Zeus has not loved [and] are terrified when they hear the voice of the Pierides». I take these lines of Ronsard to be a not very veiled reference to the Court poets who were mortified by his Pindaric initiative, a conjecture borne out by the immediate sequel:

> Heureuse lire honneure de mon enfance,
> Je te sonnai devant tous en la France
> De peu à peu, car quant premierement
> Je te trouvai, tu sonnois durement,
> Tu n'avois point de cordes qui valussent,
> Ne qui répondre aus lois de mon doi pussent.
> (I, 163)

Ronsard wisely abstained from developing in this ode the myth of the subjugation of Typhon and the description of Aetna in violent eruption — they would have been absurdly incongruous and would have distorted the purpose of *A sa lire*. But they were not permanently forgotten. They found

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[122] Norwood, p. 105.

a more appropriate place (III, 134, 135) in the Titanomachy which forms the mythological heart of the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital*.[123]

For both Pindar and Ronsard the symbolic value of the lyre as an intellectual projection of the idea of universal harmony had an intensely real existence. The meaning of the first Pythian is concentrated in this conceptual symbol and its entire structure is determined by it. This is not the case in Ronsard's ode. The conceptual force of the symbol of the lyre is hardly felt beyond the prelude itself, for it has been subordinated to the imperatives of Ronsard's ambition of becoming the poet laureate of France.

[123] Cf. VI, 88; VIII, 7; IX, 54; XIII, 160, 167.

CHAPTER XX

WAR AND PEACE

I. Pindar on the Games and War

When the funeral pyre of Patroclus had been quenched with flaming wine and his grieving comrades were about to depart, «Achilles stayed the folk even where they were, and made them to sit in a wide gathering; and from his ships brought forth prizes; cauldrons and tripods and horses and mules and strong oxen and fair-girdled women and grey iron. For swift charioteers first he set forth goodly prizes, a woman to lead away, one skilled in goodly handiwork, and an eared tripod of two and twenty measures for him that should be first...» (*Iliad*, XXIII, 257-265; trans. Murray). There were prizes also for four additional charioteers less fortunate than the first, and awards for contestants in boxing wrestling, javelin-throwing, and foot-racing. Even though «In Homer we hear of no athletic festivals» (Gardiner, p. 29), the funeral games for Patroclus may be described as an anticipation of certain aspects of the Great Games that in later years were to form part of the athletic festivals of Greece.

The relationship of the funeral games and war is powerfully suggested by these passages of the *Iliad*. In Homeric society «military and physical exercises are the chief part of every boy's training, and the natural recreation of the men», Gardiner wrote (p. 18). More than a recreation: «Every Achaean warrior is an athlete...» (*loc. cit.*); athletics «were the means of training and maintaining the physical vigour and activity which he needed in a warlike age. But they were almost equally essential to the Greek of the fifth century. Greece was never a land of peace; quarrels between neighbouring states were frequent... the citizen might at a moment's notice be called upon to take the field and fight, and in the conditions of ancient warfare his safety depended on his physical fitness» (*op. cit.*, p. 28).

In 498 the race in armor was introduced at Olympia. It was the last of all the events (Sandys, p. xxviii). The runner in this race «portait primitivement l'armure complète, et ne porta plus ensuite que le bouclier» (Puech, I, 6). Though Pindar, whose first triumphal ode, the tenth Pythian, was performed in 498, may not have regarded the Games as a training-field for war, he

saw athletics and war as bearing some resemblance to each other and sometimes equated the two.[1]

«The popularity of athletics reached its height at the time of the Persian wars. The victory of Greeks over Persians was the victory of free city states over oriental despotism; it was the victory of a handful of trained athletes over hordes of effeminate barbarians. So the national triumph found its fullest expression in the great national games, where in honour of the national gods the picked representatives of the city states competed in friendly contests. The victory of Plataea was commemorated by national memorials at Olympia and Delphi and by the founding of a new athletic festival the 'Eleutheria', 'the Festival of Freedom'... significant are the records of the Olympic games of 476 B.C., the first Games held after the war... No fewer than five of Pindar's Olympian odes were written in praise of the victors in this Olympiad» (Gardiner, pp. 42-43).

In his article on «Pindar and the Persian Invasion» J.H. Finley, Jr. says, «As for the equation of war to athletics, [Pindar] describes himself in the self-revealing lines, *O.*, 6, 85-90, as ἀνδράσιν αἰχματαῖσι πλέκων ποικίλον ὕμνον (cf. *O.*, 13, 51; *I.*, 1, 50); it seems not too much to say that his entire use of myth rests on the relevance of games to warfare».[2] In the passage of the first Isthmian to which Finley refers Pindar wrote: «Whosoever winneth bright renown, either in the games or in war, receiveth the highest gain in the choicest praises of citizens and strangers.» In the last of the triumphal odes, the eighth Pythian, the association of poetry with both games and war is inseparable: Aegina, he says, «is famed in song for having fostered heroes supreme in many a victorious contest [ἀέθλοις] and in swift battles [μάχαις]» (25-27).[3]

II. Ronsard Agonistes on the Games and War

In his ode of 1550 *A Madame Marguerite* (inc. *Vierge, dont la vertu redore*) Ronsard describes how the immensely powerful voice of Pindar, «comme la foudre guindée», proclaimed throughout the world the praises of the victors in the athletic festivals:

> Elle, par les terres estranges,
> Cria des vainqueurs les louanges,
> Et plustost les fut elevant
> Que l'air n'est froissé par la vire,

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[1] *Bowra, Pindar*, pp. 183-184, who adds (p. 186), that for Pindar «ἀρετά in the athlete and in the soldier is identical».

[2] *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, LXIII (1958), 131, n. 12.

[3] Cf. Nem., I, 16-18; V, 19-20.

Ou l'eau ronflante du navire
Soufleté des gorges du vent.
(III, 111)

It is an interesting confirmation of the permanence of Ronsard's attraction to Pindar and to Pindaric themes that these verses were thoroughly revised in the first posthumous edition in a manner that emphasized their image of the Games at Olympia:

Elle par les terres lointaines
Respandit les poudreuses peines
De ceux qu'Olympe veit suer
Pour l'honneur, le prix de la gloire,
Ressuscitez par la memoire
Que trois mille ans n'ont sceu tuer.

That image has nowhere been developed more fully in Ronsard's poetry than in the central stanzas of this ode to Marguerite (vv. 193-228). They describe the ardor of the «belliqueux» young men of Greece (v. 194) in pursuit of the olive crown of victory: the triumphant runners, the boxers, wrestlers, the javelin- and discus-throwers, the horse- and chariot-racers — all finally gathered at the end of the festival to celebrate their victories in music and song under the light of the full moon (vv. 223-228).[4]

The funeral games for Patroclus were in Ronsard's mind when in 1553, in the *Elegie sur le trepas d'Antoine Chateigner... qui mourut à l'assaut de Terouane*, he wrote:

... car si j'estois Achille
Je meurtriroi sur ta fosse cent mille
Espagnos, tes meurtriers, & te feroi des jeus,
Que d'an en an nos plus tardis neveus
Devôs celebreroient, & d'escrime & de course...
Reçoi, mon cher Patrocl, au milieu de ce pré
Ce neuf autel à ton nom consacré...
(V, 250-251)

The *Franciade*, of course, could not be complete without a passage on the athletic contests of the warriors, though it follows Virgil rather than Homer, and in the allusion to «la barriere» seems to introduce a medieval note:

Devant la porte en assez long espace,
Large, quarré, estoit une grand'place,
Où la jeunesse aux armes s'esbatoit,
Piquoit chevaux, voltigeoit ou lutoit,

[4] The contests described in *Les Isles fortunées* (V, 175-191) are presented more briefly (vv. 231-242), and are in no way associated with warfare because the poem is itself, as the title suggests and the opening verses confirm, an imaginary escape from a Europe torn by war.

Courroit, sautoit, ou gardoit la barriere,
Jusques au ciel en voloit la poussiere.
(XVI, 134)

From time to time Ronsard refers to himself or to a friend or to a person eminent in public life as to an athlete struggling against adversaries in some honorable cause. That cause may be polemical rather than military, as for example, when at the beginning of the *Responce aux injures* he describes himself to the «Predicans & Ministres de Geneve» as a

Laborieux athlete, & poudreux d'exercice,
Qui ne tremble jamais pour un petit novice...
(XI, 117)

Ronsard will have nothing to do with such insignificant opponents,

Mais si ce grand guerrier & grand soldat de Baize
Se presente au combat, mon cueur saultera d'aise,
D'un si fort ennemy je seray glorieux,
Et Dieu scait qui des deux sera victorieux:
Hardy je planteray mes pas dessus l'arene,
Je roidiray les bras souflant à grosse halene,
Et pressant, & tournant, suant, & haletant,
Du matin jusque au soir je l'yray combatant,
Sans deslier des mains ny cestes ny courayes
Que tous deux ne soyons enyvrez de nos playes.
(XI, 118)[5]

Long after the polemical exchanges with the Huguenots had come to an end the image of the agonist, now stricken in years, finds a place in the second book of the *Sonets pour Helene*:

Comme un vieil combatant, qui ne veut plus s'armer,
Ayant le corps chargé de coups & de vieillesse,
Regarde, en s'esbatant, l'Olympique jeunesse
Pleine d'un sang bouillant aux joustes escrimer:

Ainsi je regardois du jeune Dieu d'aimer,
Dieu qui combat tousjours par ruse & par finesse,
Les gaillards champions, qui d'une chaude presse
Se veulent dans le camp amoureux enfermer.
(XVII, 263)

Here Ronsard has impressed for service in the skirmishes of Eros a theme that he had employed on a more serious occasion a decade earlier in the *Epitaphe de... Anne duc de Montmorancy* (1567), mortally wounded in the battle of Saint-Denis:

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[5] Cf. in XV, 403 the liminary poem by Ronsard (inc. *Voicy ce bon Luteur*) that appeared in the second edition (1572) of Remy Belleau's *Bergerie*, in which Belleau is cast in the role of a wrestler victorious over Ignorance.

Or come on voit qu'un bon athlete antique
Ne peut souffrir que la jouste Olimpique,
Où des jeunesse il avoit combatu,
Sans luy se passe: encor que la vertu
De son vieil corps par l'age soit cassée,
Chaud toutefois d'une jeune pensée,
Du croc rouillé destache son harnois,
Et va combatre au mylieu des tournois,
Et tout poudreux, de mourir il essaye,
Non de vieillesse, ains d'une belle playe,
Par son sang mesme aquerant de l'honneur:
Ainsi a faict ce vertueux Seigneur,
Lequel chargé de quatre vingtz ans d'age,
(Plein toutefois d'un valeureux courage)
Pour s'honnorer d'un glorieux trespas,
Versa son sang au mylieu des combats...
(XV, 7-8)

Ronsard thus honored Montmorency *in extremis* as a warrior-agonist who had given his life in defense of his country. It was in part for the same Montmorency that Ronsard in 1555 had composed *Le Temple de Messeigneurs le Connestable, et des Chastillons*, whose prelude was an abridged description of the athletic festival that the poet promised to establish in their honor, and in which the victorious contestant would be proclaimed

(comme au lustre Olympique)
Soit de lutte, ou de course, ou de lance, ou de pique.
(VIII, 73)

The center of this «Olympian» temple was reserved for a statue of Montmorency-Mars, which symbolized the implicit relationship uniting the athletic games and military activity:

Dans le meillieu du Temple ANNE MOMMORENCY
Sera portrait tout seul, mais portrait tout ainsi
Que Mars est equippé, quand il arenge en armes
Du long bout de sa pique un peuple de gendarmes...
Ainsi ce Connestable habillé comme un Dieu,
Du temple à luy sacré tiendra tout le meillieu,
Ayant le glaive nud, tiré pour l'asseurance
Des bons, & pour punir des vicieux l'offence.
Tout à-l'entour de luy sus quatre pilliers blancz
Je feray cizeler ses gestes les plus grands,
Et non pas les petits: car qui voudroit deduire
Tous ses faitz un-à-un, on n'y pourroit suffire.
(VIII, 74)

In his biography of Ronsard (*Vie*, pp. 29-30), Claude Binet included an unfinished fragment of a poem that Ronsard, not long before his death, addressed to Jean Galland. In it one senses the very real affection that the poet felt for the friend of his old age, as well as the nostalgia of Ronsard

agonistes for the life, or more exactly, for the image of an athletic and militant life that he was abandoning to a younger companion still capable of spurning the Olympian sands of Elis:

> Ja mon soir s'embrunit, & desja ma journée
> Fuit vers son Occident à demy retournée.
> La Parque ne me veult ny me peut secourir:
> Encore ta carriere est bien longue à courir,
> Ta vie est en sa course, & d'une forte haleine
> Et d'un pied vigoureux tu fais jallir l'areine
> Sous tes pas, aussi fort que quelque bon guerrier
> Le sable Ælean, pour le pris du Laurier.
> (XVIII, 292)

III. Ronsard's Lyric Program and War

When Ronsard announced his lyric program in 1550 in the preface of the first four books of odes, he put off to a more convenient time an account of certain matters relating to Greek lyric poetry: the construction of the triadic ode, the invention of the lyre, and «en quel honneur estoient jadis les Poëtes liriques, comme ils accordoient les guerres emeues entre les Rois...» (I, 46). To have written thus Ronsard must have known that the Greek lyric poet Simonides had occupied a position of considerable importance at the Court of Hieron in Syracuse, where «His prestige and experience of public affairs enabled him to reconcile Theron and Hieron when they were on the brink of war».[6]

The year in which Ronsard's preface was published also saw the publication of his *Ode de la Paix* which celebrated the signature of the treaty of peace between Henri II of France and Edward VI of England (III, 3, n. 1). Ronsard, of course, had nothing to do with the negotiations between the two monarchs, but the circumstances must at least have added something, if only slightly and indirectly, to his experience of public affairs, and brought him to the attention of Henri II to whom the *Ode de la Paix* was dedicated. The prestige that would enable him in a similar situation, some years later, to assume at the Court of Henri II a role resembling somewhat that of Simonides at the Court of Hieron, was gradually to be established in the intervening time. That his writing during this period sometimes treated military subjects inspired by Greek poetry is evident from the publication in 1553 of *La Harangue que fit Monseigneur le duc de Guise aus soudards de Mez... tra-*

[6] Bowra, *GLP*, p. 359, citing the scholiast on Ol., II, 29; the passage is reproduced by J.M. Edmonds, *Lyra Graeca*, II, 262-263.

duite en partie de Tyrtée poëte grec... (V, 203-219).[7] «C'est presque en héros de l'antiquité qu'il chante la guerre», says Franchet,[8] who adds, with respect to the address to the soldiers put by Ronsard into the mouth of the Duc de Guise, «Ce sont bien, selon son expression même [V, 209, v. 112], des 'vers Tyrteans'».[9]

In the same year Ronsard published his *Elegie à J. de la Peruse* which clearly suggests that Du Bellay, likewise inspired by the great lyrists of antiquity, had also, in emulation of the poet of Vendôme, sung of the military exploits of the rulers of France:

> De sa faveur en France il [Dieu] reveilla
> Mon jeune esprit, qui premier travailla
> De marier les Odes à la Lire...
> Par deus chemins suivant la vieille trace
> Des premiers pas de Pindare & d'Horace.
> Presque d'un tans le méme esprit divin
> Dessommeilla du Bellai l'Angevin,
> Qui bravement sur sa lire d'ivoire
> Chanta guerrier de nos princes la gloire.[10]
> (V, 260-261)

The war between France and Spain in the years 1557-1559 brought Ronsard an opportunity, perhaps even the obligation, to contribute in a quasi-Simonidean fashion to «accorder les guerres emeues entre les Rois». In January 1554 he had received the title of «poëte du Roi», and after the death of Mellin de Saint-Gelais on 14 October 1558, he was named «conseiller et aumônier du Roi» (IX, pp. vii-viii). «En l'espace d'un an, du mois d'août 1558 au mois d'août 1559, il publie... une série de huit plaquettes d'un caractère officiel, ou semi-officiel, interprétant les volontés du Roi, glorifiant ses actes et ceux de ses grands collaborateurs, traduisant l'allégresse de la Cour, de la Ville et de la Nation, inspirée par la libération du Connétable[11] et par

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[7] Ronsard's versatility in adapting his sources to the most improbable uses is indicated in the following note by Laumonier on a passage of the second *Folastrie* (V, 18): «A partir d'ici [v. 19] la pièce semble parodier les élégies guerrières de Tyrtée, que Ronsard a imitées... dans la *Harangue de Mgr le duc de Guise aus soudars de Mez*.»

[8] *Le Poète et son œuvre d'après Ronsard*, p. 240.

[9] *Op. cit.*, p. 241. — «Ici [V, 209, v. 113] commence la 'harangue' de François de Guise. Jusqu'au vers 242, elle est imitée et paraphrasée, mais non 'traduite' de trois chants guerriers de Tyrtée...» Note by Laumonier. — «Ce que nous appelons aujourd'hui sentiment national et sentiment patriotique en est presque absent, et l'impression dominante demeure celle d'un bel exercice oratoire, dans lequel le poète s'échauffe artificiellement sur des souvenirs de lectures.» Weber, p. 93. — See also the analysis of the *Harangue* in Demerson, *La Mythologie classique dans l'œuvre lyrique de la Pléiade*, pp. 288-292.

[10] «Allusion à certaines pièces du *Recueil de Poësie* publié en novembre 1549, par ex. le *Prosphonématique* (éd. H. Chamard, t. III, pp. 61, 75, 142).» Note by Laumonier.

[11] Captured at the battle of Saint-Quentin in August 1557.

les autres événements précurseurs de la paix, se faisant le héraut du traité signé au Cateau-Cambrésis, qui, si peu reluisant qu'il fût pour nous, mettait fin tout de même à la rivalité presque séculaire entre la maison de France et celle d'Espagne...» (IX, p. viii).

Ronsard's intervention as «poëte du Roi» and «conseiller du Roi» took the form of compositions, quite probably officially inspired, which reflected the alternating phases of the hostilities and negotiations between the French and Spanish adversaries. Thus, in August 1558, as the two armies faced each other in the neighborhood of Amiens, Ronsard composed his *Exhortation au camp du Roy pour bien combattre le jour de la bataille*, which, as Henri Chamard says, «rappelle singulièrement la *Harangue du duc de Guise aux soudars de Metz*, publiée cinq années plus tôt. C'est la même vigueur guerrière, et l'on croirait encore entendre du Tyrtée».[12]

But the battle was never fought. Negotiations for peace, set in motion in September and October, led Ronsard at once to compose his *Exhortation pour la Paix*. Within the space of about a month he had written poems of absolutely contradictory character[13]. In late August:

> L'heure que vous avez si longtemps attendue,
> Maintenant (ô Soldas) en vos mains s'est rendue...
> (IX, 3)

In September or early October:

> Non, ne combatez pas, vivez en amitié,
> CHRETIENS, changez vostre ire avecque la pitié...
> (IX, 15)

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[12] *Hist. de la Pl.*, II, 297; cf. above, n. 9. — For the military achievements of Ronsard's maternal ancestors, see VI, 63-64; for his seemingly contradictory comments on his own military vocation, see X, 300, 303-304, 334-335. The contradiction may be more apparent than real. Ronsard's partial deafness probably led to his choice of a poetic rather than a military career.

[13] Cf. Weber, p. 95. Ronsard's pliant willingness at this time to write in favor of war or peace as the fitful demands of national policy dictated are in sharp contrast with the steadfast, lifelong pacifism of an Erasmus. «J'ai voulu insister», J.-C. Margolin writes in *Guerre et paix dans la pensée d'Erasme*, p. 9, «sur le caractère permanent du pacifisme érasmien: plus qu'une idée, plus qu'un thème de méditation, la paix entre les nations d'Europe et surtout entre les Chrétiens, la paix de l'homme avec lui-même et avec ses semblables, la paix de l'homme avec Dieu, la dignitié de l'esprit qui refuse de s'incliner devant la bestialité de l'instinct, sont pour Erasme l'une de ces évidences vitales, pour ne pas dire une obsession majeure, qui l'accompagne avant, pendant et après qu'il ait déchargé son message de paix selon des circonstances historiques précises ou des opportunités personnelles.» — Jacques Chomarat, in «Un ennemi de la guerre: Erasme.» *Bull. de l'Assoc. Guillaume Budé*, XXXIII (1974), 445-465, presents a synthesis of Erasmus' thought on war and peace. See also F.M. Plaisant, «L guerre et la paix selon Rabelais», in the same issue of the *Bulletin*, pp. 467-492. — It is not possible to exculpate Ronsard on the ground that in 1558 he was encouraging the soldiers to defend France against external aggression: the voice that speaks in his warlike poem is not his own, but that of the Pouvoir. Besides he did not hesitate to use his poetic gift in urging aggression against neighboring countries. See *RGTP*, pp. 52-54.

«It thus emerges that Ronsard was very closely associated with the propagation of royal policies at this period. In the jargon of the modern political commentator we might speak of an 'informed source'.»[14]

What further results from the preceding account are two significant differences between the roles of Simonides and Ronsard. The former acted on his own initiative and his efforts were exerted to bring peace between Hieron and Theron; the latter initiated nothing, but was the more or less official spokesman for Henri II, prepared to advocate either war or peace as he was directed to do.[15]

Henri Weber was thinking principally of *La Harangue* when he wrote (p. 93), «Mais, là encore, l'émotion directe et le sentiment national sont subordonnés à la flatterie, il faut louer les chefs militaires comme le connétable de Montmorency ou le duc de Guise, encenser la personne du roi, interpréter fidèlement les intentions politiques du gouvernement. Naturellement l'imitation abusive des procédés de la poésie grecque et en particulier de la poésie alexandrine vient suppléer au vide du sentiment, lorsque la flatterie est l'élément principal du poème». For the *Exhortation au camp du Roy* he is justifiably more lenient: «Cependant, les revers de Saint-Quentin en 1557, qui font un moment craindre l'investissement de la capitale, puis le redressement de la situation militaire avec la prise de Calais en 1558 vont éveiller une émotion plus sincère et faire naître une poésie plus proche de la réalité» (p. 94).

IV. «Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori»

In the fifteenth book of the *Iliad* Hector encourages the Trojans and the Lycians to fight valorously in defense of their wives, their children, their homeland: «No unseemly thing is it for him to die while fighting for his country» (496-497).

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[14] Francis M. Higman, «Ronsard's Political and Polemical Poetry», *RTP*, p. 248. See Lebègue, I, 25. Cf. three articles by James Hutton: «Rhetorical Doctrine and Some Poems of Ronsard» (above, Chap. XVII, n. 24); «The 'Lost' *Cohortatio Pacificatoria* of Jacques Peletier du Mans», *BHR*, XXII (1960), 302-319; «Erasmus and France: the Propaganda for Peace», *Studies in the Renaissance*, VIII (1961), 103-127. — For Ronsard's efforts to reconcile Henri II and Emmanuel-Philibert de Savoie, commander of the Spanish forces, see also the *Discours à... Monseigneur le duc de Savoye*, IX, 166, vv. 215-216; 167, vv. 231-234; 168, vv. 255-256. — In 1565 Ronsard acted in a not dissimilar role when, «A la demande de Catherine de Médicis» (XIII, p. x), he dedicated the *Elegies, Mascarades et Bergerie* «A la Majesté de la Royne d'Angleterre». See *RST*, pp. 217-218, M.C. Smith, «Ronsard and Queen Elizabeth I», *BHR*, XXIX (1967), 93-119, and Higman, *RTP*, p. 275.

[15] Cf. Daniel Ménager, «Ronsard et le poème de circonstance», *Culture et pouvoir au temps de l'Humanisme et de la Renaissance*. Actes du Congrès Marguerite de Savoie — Annecy, Chambéry, Turin 29 avril-4 mai 1974 — publiés par Louis Terreaux (Geneva, Paris, 1978), p. 321.

The principle was so fundamental that it must have become a permanent possession of every Greek mind and heart. This was especially true of the Spartans, though they were motivated by the desire for conquest, rather than the need for self-defense. In order «to increase the number of lots of land for their citizens»,[16] the Spartans reduced the neighboring Messenians to the condition of Helots, and in the process reduced Sparta to the condition of what we would today describe as a totalitarian state maintaining itself by the permanent military suppression of an enslaved but sometimes rebellious peasantry.

The citizens of such an autocratic state had of necessity to place what it took to be the imperative needs of the community above every personal consideration. The establishment of this ideal of citizenship is attributed by Plutarch to the legendary Lycurgus: «In a word, he trained his fellow-citizens to have neither the wish nor the ability to live for themselves; but like bees they were to make themselves always integral parts of the whole community, clustering together about their leader, almost beside themselves with enthusiasm and noble ambition, and to belong wholly to their country.»[17]

The historicity of Lycurgus is still disputed by classical scholars. What is not open to question is the success of the Spartan elegiac poet Tyrtaeus (7th century B.C.) in fixing the Lycurgean ideal as an ingrained quality of the national character, what Werner Jaeger has called «the foundation of the whole Spartan cosmos».[18] «At a time of danger, the ideal suddenly manifested itself with overpowering force... Tyrtaeus came to express in eternal poetry the new civic virtues which were needed in the national crisis.»[19]

The essence of Tyrtaeus' exhortations to the Spartan youth is contained in two verses reminiscent of those in the fifteenth book of the *Iliad*, though inspired by wholly different circumstances: «'Tis a fair thing for a good man to fall and die fighting in the van for his native land.»[20]

If Ronsard had not read these verses before 1553[21] he surely became acquainted with them in that year when the second edition of his *Amours* for

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[16] J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece to the Death of Alexander the Great* (London, 1902), I, 134.

[17] Bernadotte Perrin, ed. and tr., *Plutarch's Lives* with an English translation (London, New York, 1928), I, 283.

[18] *Paideia*, I, 88.

[19] *Paideia*, I, 88-89; cf. Fränkel, pp. 337-339.

[20] J.M. Edmonds, *Elegy and Iambus... with the Anacreontea* (London, New York, 1931), I, 69.

[21] Laumonier points out (*RPL*, p. 124; *Vie*, p. 99), that Ronsard, who probably audited Turnèbe's lectures from 1551 to 1553, may have studied the fragments of Tyrtaeus during that time. In 1553 Turnèbe published the text and Latin translation of Tyrtaeus and sixteen other Greek poets (*RPL*, p. 124 ns. 4 and 5).

Cassandre appeared with the *Commentary* of Muret. On the second tercet of sonnet XLI (inc. *Ores l'effroy*):

> Verray-je point qu'en ses bras enlassé,
> De trop combatre honnestement lassé,
> Honnestement entre ses bras je meure?
> (IV, 44)

the commentator quotes (p. 52) with astonishing irrelevance: «Tyrtæe,

> Τεθνάμεναι γὰρ καλὸν ἐπὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
> Ἄνδρα ἀγαθόν.»[22]

It seems clear that Muret recognized the irrelevance of what he had quoted because of his significant omission of more than half of the second verse of the distich: περὶ ᾗ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον, «fighting for his native land», thus incongruously adapting a passage of military exhortation to erotic exegesis.

These verses of Tyrtaeus find their true echo not in the *Amours* but in the *Harangue*:

> Mouron, mouron, Amis, il vaut mieus pour defendre
> Nous & nôtre païs l'âme vaillante rendre,
> L'âme vaillante rendre au dessus du rampart[23]...
> (V, 214)

In a time torn by wars whose foreign and domestic aspects were sometimes inextricably intertwined Pindar carried on the tradition which glorified those who gave up their lives in defense of a Panhellenic vision of liberty, or to protect their fatherland, Thebes, which was also his own. «Il n'est jamais si éloquent», says Croiset (p. 260), «que quand il parle de ceux qui sont morts pour cette patrie bien-aimée... Il chante... avec la mâle énergie d'un Tyrtée, le sort de ceux qui sont tombés sur le champ de bataille...» «For whoso, in this cloud of war, defendeth his dear father-land against the hail-storm of blood, by dealing death to the host of the foemen, let him know assuredly that he is causing the greatest glory to grow for the race of his fellow-townsmen...» (Isth., VII, 27-29). «In one of his dithyrambs (fr. 78)», Fränkel writes (p. 484), «Pindar addresses the war-cry 'alala', shouted by Greek armies before joining battle, in the following terms: Hear me, Alala, daughter of Ares, prelude of the spears, you to whom men fall as offerings for their homeland in death's holy sacrifice.»

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[22] Laumonier (V, 209, n. 2), refers to this and to two other passages in Tyrtaeus as sources of the address to the soldiers by François de Guise (see above, n. 9).

[23] See R. Lebègue in *L.*, V, 271 (2e tirage, 1968, *Appendice*), for other examples of this theme in Ronsard.

The patriotism of the author of *L'Hymne de France*, of the *Discours des miseres*, and of so many other poems composed in good or evil times and devoted in whole or in part to France, is beyond question, even when, in a moment of despondency, he may have said to her, «Tu es marastre aux tiens, & mere aux estrangers».[24]

The sentiment of such moments was, of course, ephemeral, though it may have become somewhat less so in Ronsard's later years. What was enduring, in spite of the disappointments he experienced, was the emotion expressed in 1555 in the opening verses of the ode *A Monsieur le Dauphin*, the future François II:

> Que pourroi-je, moi François,
> Mieus celebrer que la France,
> Le païs à qui je dois
> Le bon heur de ma naissance?
> (VII, 41)

In the thought and movement of these verses Laumonier (p. 41, n. 5) rightly saw a relationship to the beginning of the first Isthmian ode: «O Mother mine, O Thebe of the golden shield, I shall deem thy behest enough to outweigh all lack of leisure... What is dearer to the good than noble parents?» Thebe, a river-nymph, was the eponymous heroine of the city of Thebes, and symbolically the mother to whom Pindar's thought turns first in filial love, as Ronsard's turns to France, the mother who had given him life.

It was not the first time that Ronsard, paraphrasing in the prelude of one of his Pindaric odes the proem of a song of Pindar's, had written of France in this vein. In 1547, *La victoire de Gui de Chabot* begins with an apostrophe to mother France inspired by the initial verses of the fifth Olympian:

> O France mere fertile
> D'un peuple à la guerre utile,
> Terre pleine de grand heur,
> Reçoi la douce couronne
> Que Chabot consacre & donne
> Au temple de ta grandeur...
> (I, 100-101)

For the victor in the mule chariot-race, Psaumis of Camarina, the Sicilian city on the shores of the lake of the same name, Pindar wrote an ode that

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[24] *Elegie à Guillaume des Autels*, X, 357, v. 159; cf. *Hymne de l'Hyver*, XII, 74, v. 135: «Il ayme l'estranger & ses parens recule.» The resemblance between these verses is not a mere accident of composition. Malcolm C. Smith, in his article on «The Hidden Meaning of Ronsard's *Hymne de l'Hyver*, in *FRSS*, pp. 85-97, has demonstrated convincingly the allegorical nature of the *Hymne*, and its close relationship to his polemical poetry of this period, foreshadowed in the elegy to Des Autels. It should be noted, however, that in the elegy Ronsard speaks in his own person, while in the hymn we hear in the words of Boreas the allegorical voice of the rebellious Huguenots.

begins by glorifying the city to which Psaumis had brought such fame: «Daughter of Oceanus! receive with happy heart the choicest prize of deeds of prowess and of crowns Olympian, the guerdon won by Psaumis and his tireless-footed team, — Psaumis who, exalting thy city, Camarina, that fostereth its people... hath set up for thee a bright renown...» (1-4, 7-8). In Ronsard's ode, Laumonier says (p. 101, n. 1), «Camarine devient la France, et Psaumis Guy de Chabot».

L'Hymne de France was probably composed two years after the ode to Chabot, in October 1549. Ronsard, inspired by the capture of the forts of Boulogne from the English in August and September, and anticipating what he would say in his ode *A Monsieur le Dauphin*, undertakes, as a devoted son of France, to celebrate every aspect of the life of his country:

> Le Grec vanteur la Grece vantera,
> Et l'Espaignol l'Espaigne chantera,
> L'Italien les Itales fertiles,
> Mais moy Françoys, la France aux belle villes...
> (I, 25)

The cities of France — their number, their beauty, their power — excite the patriotic admiration of the poet:

> Qui contera l'exercite des nues,
> Grosses de gresle, & de pluyes menues,
> (Lors que la bize horrible les rencontre,
> Ou quand le ciel se courouce alencontre
> D'un camp, qui fait injustement la guerre,
> Le punissant d'oraige & de tonnerre)
> Il contera de la France les ports,
> Et les citez, les villes, & les forts,
> Droict elevants un front audacieux,
> Et un sourcil qui menace les cieux.
> (I, 31-32)

No doubt Laumonier commented correctly on these verses when he wrote (p. 32, n. 1): «Pour la façon dont Ronsard présente l'idée de ces dix vers, cf. Catulle, *Epith. de Julie et Manlius*, 206-210»:

> Ille pulvis Erythrei,
> Siderumque micantium
> Subducat numerum prius,
> Qui vostri numerare volt
> Multa millia ludi.

But this passage is plainly inadequate to account for a number of Ronsard's lines, especially those dealing with storm and thunder, with the army of clouds driven by the wind and teeming with rain and hail. For this we must go to the sixth Pythian ode which Pindar, confident that his poem will outlast the erosion of time, describes as a «victor's treasure-house of song,

which neither wintry rain with its invading onset, the pitiless host [στρατός, army] launched from deep-thundering clouds, nor the storm-wind with its swirl of shingle, shall buffet and sweep away into the recesses of the sea» (7-14).

Even if Pindar's surviving poems had remained unpublished during Ronsard's lifetime, given the circumstances which divided France into two self-destroying camps, fighting, as the Greeks of Pindar's time had fought, an interminable and sometimes inextricable foreign and domestic war, he would surely have written poetry of a vibrantly patriotic, though uncompromisingly partisan, tone. For this he needed to serve no apprenticeship with him who was by far the greatest of the Greek lyric poets, nor with Tyrtaeus, nor with Horace. Nevertheless, the thought expressed by each of these is often present to his mind long before the outbreak of the religious wars.

In the *Elegie sur le trepas d'Antoine Chateignier... qui mourut à l'assaut de Terouane...* (1553), Ronsard wrote these words of consolation to the father of his friend and fellow-poet:

Pourtant, Pere vieillard, pren quelque reconfort,
Et d'un vain pleur ne honnis point sa mort.
«Celui ne meurt trop tôt, n'eust-il que vint années,[25]
«Qui brave meurt au milieu des armées,
«Ainsi qu'a fait ton fils, pour son Roi bataillant:
«Tel' mort convient à tout homme vaillant...
«Celui n'est point tué, qui meurt honnestement
«Tenant au poin la pique bravement,
«Pour sauver sa patrie...
(V, 249)

In the final verses of the *Hymne de la Mort* Ronsard prays that he too may have as glorious a death:

Je te salue, heureuse & profitable MORT,
Des extremes douleurs medecin & confort:
Quand mon heure viendra, Deesse, je te prie,
Ne me laisse long temps languir en maladie
Tourmenté dans un lict: mais, puis qu'il faut mourir,
Donne moy que soudain je te puisse encourir,
Ou pour l'honneur de Dieu, ou pour servir mon Prince,
Navré d'une grand' playe au bort de ma province.
(VIII, 178-179; cf. IX, 9)

Do we hear in the penultimate verse an intimation of the terrible conflict that was soon to ravage France? In any event, the inevitable came to pass all too soon, and Ronsard, in the *Remonstrance au peuple de France*, addressed words of encouragement to the nobles who had not deserted the royal and Catholic cause:

[25] Antoine Chateigner was twenty-three years old at the time of his death.

Et vous Nobles aussi, qui n'avés renoncée
La foy, de pere en fils qui vous est annoncée,
Soutenés vostre Roy, mettés luy derechef
Le Sceptre dans la main, & la couronne au chef,
N'espargnés vostre sang, vos biens ny vostre vie:
Heureux celuy qui meurt pour garder sa patrie.
(XI, 90; cf. XI, 35; XIII, 194; XV, 111)

Ronsard's definition of fortitude in the prose discourse *Des Vertus intellectuelles et moralles*, given in the Académie du Palais before Henri III and the élite of the Court, carried the same message: «Force ou fortitude est une vertu d'endurer & souffrir les perils & dangers, & en temps & lieu, avec raison, s'exposer à la mort si besoing en est, pour le service de sa patrie & de son Prince» (XVIII, 454).

To this principle, which accompanied Ronsard from the earliest days, he remained steadfast to the end of his life. His loyalty to it did not depend on his being in the good graces of the reigning king. His relations with Henri III, for example, were rarely satisfactory, and he more than once came near to committing *lèse majesté* in poems, published and unpublished, which directly involved that monarch. Nevertheless, in his *Discours à Monsieur de Cheverny, Garde des Seaux de France*, who was soon to be elevated by Henri III to the rank of Chancellor, Ronsard wrote in 1581 that even if one were to fall into disgrace and suffer banishment from the Court,

Il ne faut pour cela comme un faux citoyen
Perdre force ny cœur, mais mettre tout moyen,
Artifice & sçavoir, mesme la propre vie
Pour aider, secourir & servir sa patrie...
(XVIII, 103-104)

V. The Glory and the Horror

The third Nemean recounts the upbringing of Achilles by Chiron who exalted «his spirit with all things fitting, that so... he might withstand the clashing onset and the war-shout of the Lycians, and the Phrygians and Dardanians... Hence it was that the far-shining splendour of the Aeacidae hath been made immortal; for they are thy blood, O Zeus, and thine is the contest on which my song hath lighted, a song that chanteth with the voice of youths the glory of the land» (58-66).

Ronsard remembered this passage when in 1555 he composed the ode *A la Roine* (inc. *Mere des Dieus ancienne*). Catherine de Médicis had confided the education of the Dauphin François to Claude d'Urfé, and the poet saw in this a parallel to the myth that relates how Thetis entrusted the infant Achilles to Chiron:

Mais tu l'as Roine tressage
Porté dès son premier age...
... à Durfé qui radresse
Les fautes de sa jeunesse
Par un art industrieus,
Et comme en la cire tendre
En cent façons lui faict prendre
Les vertus de ses aïeus.
Ores, une ombre il exerce
D'une bataille diverse,
Et tenant le fer en main
Les siens au combat il serre,
Et brave esmeust d'une guerre
La figure faite en vain...
Mais cela ne le destourne
Qu'à son Durfé ne retourne
Ouir ses mos fructueus:
Ainsi l'enfançon Achille
Escoutoit la vois utille
Du Centaure vertueus,
Apres que Thetis la belle
Eust bruslé sa peau mortelle,
Et que, dedans son giron
L'enlevant de l'eau sallée,
L'eut sans le sceu de Pelée
Mis dans l'antre de Chiron.
(VII, 39-40)

Pindar wrote the ninth Nemean to celebrate the victory of Chromius of Aetna, brother-in-law of Hieron, in the chariot-race at Sicyon in 474 or 476 B.C. But the poet also seized the opportunity to glorify the courage of Chromius in battles on land and sea. Had the auditor of his ode, Pindar says, been a witness of those events, he would have «marked the peril of keen conflict, because, in war, it was that honour divine[26]who harnessed his warrior-soul to repel the onslaught of the god of battle [λοιγὸν 'Ενυαλίου]. But few have the power of conspiring with hand and soul to turn back upon the ranks of the foe the rolling cloud of carnage at their feet» (35-39).

To magnify the achievement of François de Bourbon, victorious in the battle of Cérisoles, Ronsard seems to have fully paraphrased this passage of the ninth Nemean:

Tes coups de masse, & l'horreur
De ta vaillante fureur
Qui tonnoit en ton jeune age,
Moissonnant les ennemis
Que le martial orage[27]
Devant ta foudre avoit mis.
(I, 84)

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[26] «Αἰδὼς is here personified as a goddess.» Note by Sandys.

[27] «Expression pindarique: λοιγὸς 'Ενυαλίου...» Note by Laumonier. Enyalius is «a name or epithet of Ares himself.» H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*, p. 158.

The Hieronic odes of Pindar sing most expressively of the renown that military victory may confer. Athens in 415, infatuated with the arrogance of power, might have had second thoughts about sending an expedition to Sicily had it witnessed a timely performance of the second Pythian ode for Hieron of Syracuse, or simply recalled attentively to mind the first verses of its prelude: «Mighty city of Syracuse! holy precinct of Ares, that is ever plunged in war! thou nursing-place divine of heroes and steeds that rejoice in steel!» (1-2). The same admonitory end might have been served by the prelude of the first Pythian, which so profoundly condemns the irrationality of violence and praises Hieron for his defense of Sicily against the naval attack of the Etruscans at Cumae in 474. The time to come «will remind him in what battles amid wars he once held his ground with steadfast soul, what time, from the hands of the gods, he and his won them honour, such as no other Greek hath gathered...» (47-49).

This passage, together with the one just quoted from Nemean IX,[28] provided Ronsard with the verses that exalt to the skies the victory of Gui de Chabot:

> Mesmes c'est le tout que d'estre
> Aus armes fait & adestre,
> Qui doivent briser l'audace
> De l'adversaire odieus,
> Et qui au vainqueur font place
> Au plus haut siege des dieus.
> (I, 103)

But is was, of course, for Henri II that Ronsard, in the earliest period of his rivalry with Pindar, reserved his most princely glorification as a leader in war and peace. In the *Ode de la Paix* he announces that he will publish to the world how Henri

> Maniant le fer, est adestre
> A briser l'horreur des dangers,

and with what prudence, with what «vieille jeunesse», he guides the people of France (III, 29-30). This conception of the union of courage and wisdom that a true king must possess Ronsard had found in the second Pythian ode in which Hieron is praised for his valor in battle and for «thy counsels, riper than thy years» (65).

For both Pindar and Ronsard the «grandeur» of war was not without its «misere», though there appears to be little evidence that the Theban poet's reflections on the horrors of war had found their way into the writings of the poet of Vendôme.

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[28] But see *POR*, pp. 131-132, the comments on *L.*, I, 102, 35-40, and 103, 41-46.

In the seventh Isthmian we read that Strepsiades of Thebes, winner in the pancratium, has been touched with the radiance of the violet-tressed Muses, that is to say, has attained renown in a triumphal ode, a glory which he shares with the spirit of his uncle of the same name who had given his life in defense of Thebes (23-25). For him «Ares of the brazen shield mingled the draught of death... and he breathed forth the fair bloom of his youth amid the host of warriors in the van, where the bravest sustained the strife of war in hope forlorn. And they suffered unutterable sorrow...» (23, 34-37).

For Melissus, another Theban athlete, also victorious in the pancratium, Pindar composed the fourth Isthmian ode, «for thou... hast shown me a ready resource to celebrate in song the valour of thy race... But changeful are the gales that at changeful times rush down upon all men... Alas! for, on a single day,[29] the rude hail-storm of war bereft a happy hearth of four of its heroes...» (2-3, 5-6, 16-17[b]).

In his lifetime Pindar, in alternating anguish and joy, had lived through the tremendous events that had shaken Greece in the fifth century: Marathon, Thermopylae, Salamis, Plataea, Himera, Cumae, Oenophyta. Though he may never personally have known the horrors of the battlefield, Pindar, like every Greek of that period, had learned that «To the inexperienced war is pleasant, but he that hath had experience of it, in his heart sorely feareth its approach» (frag. 110, p. 577).

Ronsard, during his adolescence, must not have had much knowledge of the true nature of warfare to have been able in 1560 to describe his early infatuation with it in such enthusiastic language:

> Des le commencement que je fuz donné page
> Pour user la plus part de la fleur de mon aage
> Au Royaume escossois de vagues emmuré,
> Qui m'eust, en m'embarquant sur la poupe, juré
> Que changeant mon espée aux armes bien aprise,
> J'eusse pris le bonnet des pasteurs de l'eglise,
> Je ne l'eusse pas creu: & me l'eust dit Phebus,
> J'eusse pensé son dire & luy n'estre qu'abus:
> Car j'avoys tout le cueur enflé d'aymer les armes,
> Je vouloys me braver au nombre des gendarmes,
> Et de mon naturel je cherchois les debatz,
> Moins desireux de paix, qu'amoureux de combatz.
> (X, 334-335; cf. VIII, 4).

Whatever the case may have been, it remains true that though Ronsard, a man of the Church, may not at any time have had much military experience, he did engage in at least one armed skirmish in 1562 with the Huguenots in defense of a particular church:

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[29] «The battle of Plataea, 479 B.C.» Note by Sandys.

Je sçay qu'ils sont cruels & tirans inhumains:
N'agueres le bon Dieu me sauva de leurs mains,
Apres m'avoir tiré cinq coups de harquebuse[30]...
(XI, 91)

One of Ronsard's earliest allusions to the horrors of war is a rather artificial exaggeration of a passage in Pindar's fifth Pythian. The first strophe of the *Ode de la Paix* felicitates Henri II for the twofold gift of virtue and reason that he has received from God:

Lequel (apres la longue horreur
De Mars vomissant sa fureur,
Et l'âpre venin de sa rage
Sur ton païs noirci d'orage)
Par l'effort d'un bras souverain,
A fait ravaller la tempeste...
(III, 4; cf. III, 91)

In the fifth Pythian Pindar congratulates Arcesilas of Cyrene whose regime has just emerged from a period of domestic turmoil. The parenthesis developed in four verses in Ronsard's poem is an expansion of three words in Pindar's ode: μετὰ χειμέριον ὄμβρον, «after the wintry storm» (10). Whereas Pindar deliberately sought to de-emphasize the commotion in Cyrene in order to conciliate the contending parties, Ronsard just as deliberately inflated the brief Greek expression in order to magnify the modest role of Henri II in bringing peace between England and France (III, 3, n. 1).

Les Isles fortunées, dedicated to Marc-Antoine de Muret, begins with a striking description of Europe torn asunder by foreign and civil wars:

Puis qu'Enyon[31] d'une effroïable trope
Piés contremont bouleverse l'Europe,
La pauvre Europe, & que l'horrible Mars
Le sang Chretien répand de toutes pars:
Or' mutinant contre soi l'Alemagne,
Or' opposant à la France l'Espagne,
Joïeus de meurtre, or' le soudart François
A l'Italie, or' l'Ecosse à l'Anglois:
Peuple chetif, qui ses forces hasarde
Contre soi-mesme...
Parton, Muret, alon chercher ailleurs
Un ciel meilleur, & d'autres chams meilleurs:

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[30] See *L.*, XI, pp. ix-x. *Hist. de la Pl.*, II, 381, gives an account of the incident; *LL.*, VIII, 214-216, reproduces the testimony of Ronsard's contemporaries. See also Perdrizet, pp. 43-46. On the date of the skirmish (1562) see *L.*, XI, 92, n. 1, end. — In one of the *Sonets pour Helene*, inc. *Voyant par les soudars ma maison saccagee* (XVII, 330). Ronsard refers to another occasion during the religious wars which resulted in serious personal loss. At the end of his life, according to Du Perron, *Oraison funebre* (1586), pp. 73-76, Ronsard's tranquillity was again severely disturbed by military alarms.

[31] «Nom grec de la déesse de la guerre.» Note by Laumonier.

Laisson, Muret, aus Tygres effroïables,
Et aus Lions ces terres miserables:
Fuion, fuion...
(V, 175-176, 177)

In 1553, when Ronsard wrote *Les Isles fortunées*, France had still several years of very relative tranquillity before it sank into the prolonged tragedy of the religious wars. This pessimistic prelude of the poem dedicated to Muret serves, in reality, as a foil to the description that follows of a happy life devoted to intellectual and cultural pursuits in the Blessed Isles.

Between 1553 and 1562-1563, when Ronsard, in the *Discours des miseres*, published his reflections on the disastrous civil war that was to divide France for the rest of the century, he composed the *Exhortations* addressed to the soldiers of France in their struggle against the Imperial forces, poems in which we hear him alternately extol the glory and the horror of war as the voice of national policy dictated.[32] These poems, royally commissioned perhaps, are understandably more oratorical in tone than spontaneously impassioned, but there are moments when the gravity of his theme inspires verses worthy of such a poet and such a subject. In *La Paix, au Roy* (1559), he describes the calamitous consequences that ensue when «Un peuple contre l'autre en armes se remue» (v. 109):

De sur la dure enclume on rebat les espées,
Et d'acier & de fer les lames destrampées
Se tournent en cuirasse, & se laissent forger
En dague & en poignart pour nous entre-egorger...
Toutes mechancetez aux soldas sont permises,
Du pauvre sang humain on baigne les eglises...
... la cruelle arrogance
Du fer ambitieux se donne la licence
De vaguer impunie, & sans avoir egard
A la crainte des loix, perse de part en part
Aussi bien l'estomac d'une jeune pucelle,
Que celuy d'un enfant qui pend à la mamelle,
Les vieillars de leurs litz tremblans sont deboutez,
Et l'image de mort paroist de tous costez.
(IX, 109-110; cf. IX, 23-24, 133)

In the third book of the *Franciade* Terpin[33] sings to the accompaniment of his «luth» a hymn to the capricious goddess of Victory, who dispenses with unpredictable hand the glories and the horrors of the field of battle:

Royne du monde, invincible Victoire,
Dont les habits sont pourfillez de gloire,

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[32] Cf. Malcolm C. Smith, *art. cit.* (above, n. 24), p. 96: «Obviously, the poet of princes had to reflect the changing policies of princes with sensitivity and skill.»

[33] «Celui qui charme (grec τέρπω) par sa lyre.» Note by Laumonier.

D'honeur, de pompe, et dont le front guerrier
Est honoré de palme et de laurier...
Tu es douteuse, incertaine et sans foy,
Tu fais, defais, comme il te plaist, un Roy,
Puis le refais, et les citez, tenuës
Sous Tyrannie, esleves dans les nuës.
Tantost l'espoir, tantost la peur te suit:
Tout l'univers se comble de ton bruit,
Quant le Renom aux aisles emplumées
Seme par tout l'effroy de tes armées...
Le sang, la mort, la cholere acharnée,
Et des soldars la licence efrenée
Et le mesprix des grands Dieux immortels
Suivent tes pas: et toutefois tu-és
Mere des Roys, des sceptres, et des villes,
Tu fais germer les campagnes fertilles,
Et foisonner les couteaux de raisins,
Honneur des tiens, crainte de tes voisins.
(XVI, 195-197)

There is a remarkable affinity of feeling and expression, but no discernible literary debt, between a passage in the ninth Nemean, the ode for Chromius of Aetna upon which Ronsard had drawn many times, and several verses in the fourth book of the *Franciade*. Pindar, says Bowra (pp. 261-262), «was well aware that war has at times a fierce beauty, that, though it repels and horrifies, it also allures and excites, and this is what he catches in the defeat of the Seven against Thebes:

On the banks of Ismenus
They were robbed of their sweet home-coming
And fattened with their bodies the white flowers of smoke (22-23).

... It is in a way gruesome, and yet it catches the paradoxical character of war with its fusion of horror and beauty in a single setting».

In the fourth book of the *Franciade* Ronsard made an extraordinary effort, five time renewed, to describe the carnage of the victory of Mérovée over Attila. Repeatedly he seems to have rejected the earlier versions as too crudely expressed or excessively realistic:

Le ventre creux des matins ils auront
Pour leur servir de digne sepulture,
Nuds sur le champ, gras de leur pourriture.
(XVI, 294)

It was not until the posthumous variant of 1587 that he attained the desired balance and rhythm together with an imagery strong enough to convey the grisly impression of the battlefield and delicate enough (*fleurant le meurtre*) to suggest its full horror:

Les vieux corbeaux leurs corps en-tomberont,
Et des mastins les gorges affamées,
Qui vont fleurant le meurtre des armées.

Du Perron, in his *Oraison funebre sur la mort de Monsieur de Ronsard* of 1586, though he probably had not seen this posthumous variant, was hardly exaggerating when he said (p. 41), «Quand il a traité des arguments de guerres & de combats, il a tellement estonné tout le monde, que lon a pensé qu'il ne se pouvoit rien imaginer de plus espouvantable».

VI. «Faction, that manifest woe» Pindar and the Complexities of the Foreign and Civil Wars of Greece

Though Ronsard's imitations of Pindar were very numerous and touched upon many areas of sentiment, thought, and experience, there is virtually no evidence in his writings of any specific interest in the political and military events that marked the life and times of the Theban poet and left significant expressions in his work. Yet the eras of Pindar and Ronsard, separated though they were by two millennia and by vast differences in culture and civilization, had strikingly similar structural aspects and parallel dynamic forces which determined the social and historical movements of those periods and contributed profoundly to the poetic and personal development of both writers.

«Il est des rapprochements singuliers», wrote Méautis (p. 278), comparing the passage in the seventh Isthmian (27-30) glorifying warriors who give their lives in defense of their country, with a remarkably analogous section in Thucydides (Book II, Chap. XLII). Pindar was still alive when Thucydides reached young manhood. They wrote, in the given instances, about comparable, if not identical, events, occurring in a framework of history with which they were both intimately familiar and in which they were both deeply involved as Greeks and intellectuals. It must appear as an infinitely more singular rapprochement, seemingly bordering on the absurd, to seek points of resemblance between the life and times and poetry of Pindar and Ronsard, divided as they were by such an abyss of centuries and social and historic differences.

The comparison might not have appeared so absurd, however, to literary historians, and even to historians *tout court*, who have written authoritatively about Pindar and Greece, and if not directly about Ronsard in the context of history, at least about the precise period in which the poet attained full maturity as an artist and as a committed participant in the events of his time.

It would be quite hopeless to understand some of Pindar's most meaningful odes without some appreciation of the cataclysmic events which occurred in his lifetime and which left in his poetry traces whose immediate sign-

ificance must have been clear to most of his contemporaries, but became increasingly obscure to succeeding generations. Croiset (pp. 252-253) has presented the intricate historical, political, and psychological forces at work in Greece during the fifth century B.C. in such a lucid and masterful manner, at once analytic and synoptic, that it seems indispensable for our purpose to present it *in extenso*:

«L'état des esprits en Grèce, au temps des guerres médiques, était assurément, en ce qui concerne les problèmes de la politique, l'un des plus troublés, l'un des plus complexes qui se puissent imaginer. Querelles intérieures, oppositions de cités contre cités et de races contre races, guerres extérieures, toutes les difficultés s'enchevêtraient de telle sorte que les devoirs ordinairement les plus clairs du patriotisme devenaient incertains, et que les intelligences les plus droites, les consciences les plus honnêtes pouvaient, dans certaines circonstances, hésiter très loyalement sur la voie qu'il convenait de suivre.

»Au dedans chaque cité était divisée entre deux grands partis, le parti de l'aristocratie et celui de la démocratie... Depuis deux siècles déjà la lutte était ouverte dans toute la Grèce entre les défenseurs de la tradition politique et les partisans des innovations... Les partis étaient irréconciliables... Parfois aussi un troisième parti, celui du despotisme, celui des tyrans ou regrettés ou désirés, existait à côté des deux premiers... A ces querelles intérieures s'ajoutait, par suite du morcellement politique de la Grèce, la rivalité des cités entre elles. C'était quelquefois simplement le voisinage, une opposition fortuite d'intérêts, qui mettait les cités aux prises... ou bien encore la vieille antipathie des races sœurs et rivales, comme celles des Ioniens et des Doriens; ou enfin, chose de plus en plus ordinaire, c'étaient les querelles intérieures de l'aristocratie et de la démocratie, qui, dépassant l'enceinte de chaque cité, créaient des hostilités entre les villes... Ce qu'il y avait de particulièrement funeste dans ces conflits, c'est que le patriotisme local, celui qui attache l'homme au coin de terre où il est né, en souffrait de profondes blessures, sans aucun profit pour la patrie commune. De là ces trahisons sans nombre des partis vaincus, qui sont presque toujours, dans l'histoire des cités grecques, les alliés secrets ou déclarés de l'ennemi extérieur... l'esprit de parti ne pouvait s'arrêter à moitié chemin; après la cité, il sacrifia la patrie commune... Déjà au temps des guerres médiques, ce fléau faillit la perdre. L'indépendance hellénique triompha cette fois, mais ce ne fut pas sans avoir couru d'immense dangers.

»C'est au milieu de ces conflits douloureux qu'a vécu Pindare, et il est nécessaire de s'en souvenir pour s'expliquer à la fois les difficultés qu'il eut à vaincre et la dignité de sa conduite.»[34]

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[34] For similar analyses see Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 110-117; J.H. Finley, Jr., «Pindar and the Persian Invasion», *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, LXIII (1958), 122-123; J.B. Bury in *CAH*, pp. 509-510.

Pindar held the evils of civil war in particular horror. «Elle est l'ennemi des hommes», says Croiset (p. 254), «elle produit la pauvreté; elle est une mauvaise nourrice pour la jeunesse, qu'elle conduit au trépas avant le temps.» The fragment (109, p. 579) paraphrased in these words poses sharply the alternative between domestic peace and factionl strife: «Let him that giveth tranquillity to the community of citizens, look for the bright light of manly Peace, when from out his heart he hath plucked hateful faction,[35] faction that bringeth poverty, and is an ill nurse of youth.» Here Pindar reflects the essential nature of the divinity to whom he owed both his vocation as a poet and his condition as a citizen for whom harmony in the state was, in the deepest Greek sense of the expression, a musical imperative. «Apollo, the founder of the State...» he says in the fifth Pythian, «gave the cithern, and bestoweth the Muse on whomsoever he will, bringing into the heart the love of law that hateth strife» (60-67). He saw the cause of civic unrest in immoderate ambition: «Men who, in the cities, are too eager for ambition, or for faction, that manifest woe...» (frag. 210, p. 611). He might well have been thinking, as he expressed such thoughts, of the Theban oligarchs whose medizing brought humiliation and despair to their fellow citizens and death to themselves. «The sombre I. 8... record[s] the near desperation to which [Pindar] was driven in the darkening months between Salamis and Plataea.»[36]

Granted the injudiciousness of assimilating the histories of nations so completely sundered in time and circumstance as those of ancient Greece and Frnce of the Renaissance and Reformation, it is astonishing, after due allowances have been made, how the complexities, the tangle of contending interests of the one, are so largely mirrored in those of the other. Granted also the temerity of comparing the attitudes toward the foreign and civil wars of their times of two poets so diverse in temperament and style as Pindar and Ronsard, though the latter had for so long been schooled in the work of his model, no one who has read them with sympathy could fail to see in the *Caprice au Seigneur Simon Nicolas* (XVIII, 315-324), written almost at the end of Ronsard's career, a fulfillment in the life of the poet of Vendôme of a progress which the poet of Thebes had once accomplished. «Pindar had lived into an age with the spirit and ideas of which he was out of touch and out of sympathy.»[37] And the dominant theme of the *Caprice*, largely expressed in the first two verses, is one that Pindar must in some measure have espoused in his heart after Thebes had embraced the Persian cause and lost:

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[35] στάσις, «civil strife», Slater. Cf. Ol. XII, 14-16; Nem. IX, 13-14.

[36] Finley, *art. cit.*, p. 126; cf. Farnell, I, 257, 285-286.

[37] J.B. Bury in *CAH*, IV, 512.

Tout est perdu, Nicolas, tout s'empire,
Ce n'est plus rien que du François Empire,
(XVIII, 315)

Factional strife within Greek cities between the aristocratic and democratic parties, and economic and commercial rivalries among city-states, were unquestionably at the root of their inability to achieve in practice a coherent sense of Panhellenic nationhood in the face of the Persian peril. When Greeks and Persians came to blows for the first time about 500 B.C., Darius was encouraged to attack «by numerous Greek renegades who aspired to re-enter their country in the baggage-train of a Persian army... the Persian invaders were solicited by the Greeks themselves and could reckon on internal feuds within the Greek nation».[38] In a naval action between Persians and Greeks off Miletus in 494 B.C., the Samian contingent «by a deliberate act of treason hoisted their sails and bolted out of the fighting-line».[39]

Medism was endemic throughout many of the Greek cities.[40] After the death of Darius in 485, when Xerxes, four years later, resumed the Persian offensive, he «was not afraid to levy contingents from the Asiatic Greeks for service against their European compatriots».[41] Xerxes could count on certain Greek cities of the mainland to side with the Persians against their fellow Greeks. Among these was Delphi, the supreme religious and banking center of Greece. «The Delphians, anxious for the interests of the great institution under their charge, the 'Bank of Hellas', would not invite the risk of being involved in an unsuccessful or merely temporary stand against the invader... At least six, possibly nine, of the twelve 'nations' represented on the Amphictyonic Board, which nominally directed the affairs of the sanctuary,

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[38] M. Cary in *CAH*, IV, 215; cf. p. 223.

[39] M. Cary, *ibid.*, pp. 226-227.

[40] There is perhaps too tolerant an understanding of history in these observations of Gildersleeve (p. xii): «It was no treason to Medize before there was a Greece, and the Greece that came out of the Persian war was a very different thing from the cantons that ranged themselves on this side and on that of a quarrel which, we may be sure, bore another aspect to those who stood aloof from it than it wears in the eyes of moderns, who have all learned to be Hellenic patriots.» One may wonder if Pausanias, who, after the battle of Plataea, ordered the execution of the medizing oligarchs of Thebes, would have agreed that it was not treasonable to medize before there was a Greece. It is perhaps not simply playing with words to say that there was, after all and before all, a Hellas. Yet the same Pausanias later «offered to enslave his own city [Sparta] and the rest of Hellas to Xerxes, and to seal the compact by marrying his daughter». J.B. Bury, *Hist. of Greece*, I, 349. Especially to moderns, even those prepared to unlearn their Hellenic patriotism, the problem may transcend the cantonal or the national. See Norwood's excellent comment, pp. 12-13.

[41] M. Cary, *ibid.*, p. 228. Cf. J.A.R. Munro, *ibid.*, p. 312, and J.B. Bury, *Hist. of Greece*, I, 301, for the participation of the Ionians on the Persian side in the battle of Salamis in 480.

were already hastening, probably on instructions from Delphi, to give their submission to Xerxes. The policy of *la haute finance* is seldom heroic.»[42]

After the defeat of the Persian fleet at Salamis in 480 through the brilliant strategy of Themistocles, the Athenian commander, and the valor of the Athenian fleet, which bore the brunt of the attack, the medizing Greeks in the Persian army still numbered in the neighborhood of 20.000.[43] Thebes, the motherland of Pindar and the traditional enemy of Athens, was «the chief stronghold of medism in Greece», and one of the principal allies of the Persians in the battle of Plataea in 479.[44] «In sum, it is clear», says Finley, «that when Xerxes and later Mardonius [general of the Persian army] were in Thebes, a faction [of oligarchs] contracted strong bonds with them; they had everything to lose by a Greek victory [which would have brought democratic rule to Thebes], and both for that reason and from ancient animosity[45] many fought desperately against the Athenians, whom they faced at Plataea».[46]

It is easy to imagine, says Croiset (p. 271), Pindar's sadness as he witnessed the struggles in which most of Greece was on one side, while his native city of Thebes was on the other, in the Persian camp. His feelings must have been profoundly intensified after the battle of Salamis, for the destruction of the Persian fleet left no doubt that the future of Greece would be determined by a conflict on land — it was fought at Plataea the following year — from which Thebes, seen by most Greeks as the subservient instrument of their imminent enslavement to Persia, must emerge in ignominy, either in victory or defeat.[47]

Pindar's thought at this, though he is deeply grieved by the defection of Thebes,[48] turns primarily to the destiny of Hellas as a whole. In the eighth

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[42] Munro, *ibid.*, p. 283; cf. J.B. Bury, *ibid.*, p. 509: «Delphi was in a more central position [than Olympia] and men could at the same time consult the Oracle or transact business at the Panhellenic bank.» See also Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 110.

[43] Munro, *ibid.*, p. 317.

[44] Munro, *ibid.*, pp. 340, 337. — «Darius et Xerxès n'eurent pas d'alliés plus fidèles.» Croiset, p. 262.

[45] See F.E. Adcock in *CAH*, IV, 78, for the origin of hostility betwen Thebes and Athens.

[46] J.H. Finley, Jr., *art. cit.* (above, n. 34), pp. 122-123. — Georges Méautis, moved perhaps by considerations like those that led Croiset to say that the tangle of interests may have caused men of integrity to «hésiter très loyalement sur la voie qu'il convenait de suivre», declared that «Thèbes est la grande calomniée de l'histoire grecque» (p. 252). But it is doubtful whether students of Greek history would accept his astonishing statement that «Dès lors (after the defeat of the Spartans by the Persian army at Thermopylae in 480), *avec une parfaite loyauté* (my emphasi), ils (the Thebans) prirent fait et cause pour le grand Roi...» (pp. 253-254).

[47] «Les années qui suivirent Platées furent donc [pour Thèbes] des années d'abaissement, de profonde humiliation.» Méautis, p. 254.

[48] Cf. Croiset, pp. 271-272.

Isthmian for Cleandros of Aegina, whose sailors had contributed so greatly to the victory of Salamis and to the preservation of Hellenic liberty, he wrote in 478: «Though stricken sorely at heart, I am bidden to invoke the golden Muse... the trouble that Hellas could not brook, the stone of Tantalus above our head, hath now been turned aside for us by one of the gods...» (5, 9-11).

It would be simplistic in the highest degree to assume that a clear line separated the forces in Greece that accepted or rejected alliance with Persia, or that admired and fought for democratic liberties as against the rule of Persian despotism or Greek oligarchy or tyranny. Aegina, hostile to Athens from the year 506, which at Salamis and Plataea fought valiantly for the freedom of Greece on the Athenian side, had medized in 491 before the battle of Marathon, and had given Darius the required tokens of submission, earth and water.[49]

Athens herself, the bulwark of democracy in Greece, and later the enduring symbol of democratic principle throughout the western wolrd, was not completely free from actual or incipient Medism — witness the history of the banished tyrant of Athens, Hippias, who at the Court of Susa urged the Persians to undertake «an expedition against the city which had cast him out».[50] According to Herodotus (VI, cvii), Hippias guided the Persians to Marathon where he helped to organize their battle lines. The same author states (VI, cix), that Miltiades, strategus of the Athenian army at Marathon, persuaded Callimachus the polemarch to cast the deciding vote in favor of giving battle on the ground that otherwise a serious sedition might shake the resolution of the Athenian soldiers and cause them to pass over to the Persian side. The same Miltiades «had previously been a vassal of Darius».[51]

It was Pindar the Dorian, the Theban aristocrat, who in 474 uttered the gratitude of all Hellas in the splendid lines of a dithyramb to democratic Athens, the inveterate enemy of his beloved Thebes: «Oh! the gleaming, and the violet-crowned, and the sung in story; the bulwark of Hellas, famous Athens, city divine!» (frag. 76, p. 557).[52] Not long afterward, his ode for a Theban victor in the Isthmian games begins with this moving verse: «O my mother, Thebe of the golden shield...»[53]

The preceding pages may perhaps convey at least a rudimentary notion of the maze of conflicting interests in which Greeks of unquestionable per-

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[49] Bury, *Hist. of Greece*, I, 263.

[50] Bury, *loc. cit.*

[51] *OCD*, p. 571, col. 2.

[52] Norwood's scepticism concerning Pindar's sincerity goes far indeed when he describes the poet's words (p. 65) in praise of the victorious Athenian democracy as «deliberately feigned unquestioning enthusiasm».

[53] Isth., I, 1; cf. Pyth., IX, 89-92.

sonal integrity must have struggled during the period of the Persian Wars. These wars did not extend beyond the eastern Mediterranean region, but almost simultaneously, though possibly not by prearrangement, the Carthaginians were attacking the Greek cities of Sicily in the west. Some of these «phoenicized» from motives similar to those which led cities of eastern Greece to medize. «It was from a city of the northern coast [of Sicily] — from Himera itself — that the invitation which brought the Carthaginians to Sicily was actually sent...»[54] While the eastern Greeks were winning the battles of Salamis and Plataea, the Sicilian Greeks of Syracuse were overcoming the Carthaginians at Himera, and somewhat later, in 474, were defeating the Etruscans and Carthaginians in the naval battle off Cumae.

Among the great attributes which make the first Pythian so radiant a jewel in the Pindaric crown of odes, not the least is the sense it communicates of a Panhellenism[55] embracing eastern and western Greeks in a concept of nationhood arising from their common repulse of two formidable empires whose expansionist efforts could only have led to the servitude of all Hellenes: «Grant, I beseech thee, O son of Cronus, that the battle-shout of the Carthaginians and Etruscans may abide at home in peace and quiet, now that they have seen that their over-weening insolence off Cumae hath brought lamentation on their ships; such were the losses they suffered, when vanquished by the lord of the Syracusans [Hieron], — a fate which flung their warriors from their swift ships into the sea, delivering Hellas from grievous bondage. From Salamis shall I essay to win for my reward the favour of the Athenians, but, at Sparta, I shall tell of the battle [of Plataea] before Cithaeron, — those battles twain in which the Medes with curved bows suffered sorely; but, by the well-watered bank of the river Himeras, (I shall win reward) by paying my tribute of song to the sons of Deinomenes,[56] — the song of praise, which they won by their valour, while their foemen were fore-spent» (71-80).

In his *History of Greece* J.B. Bury wrote (I, 239) that Hieron sent to Olympia a bronze Etruscan helmet from the spoils of the battle of Cumae, and that «this precious memorial of one of the glorious exploits of Greece is now in the great London collection of antiquities. More precious still is the song in which Pindar of Thebes immortalised the victory».

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[54] R. Hackforth in *CAH*, IV, 375-376.

[55] «For in the sense that he loved all Greece, that he felt the ties of blood, of speech, above all, the ties of religion, Pindar was Panhellenic.» Gildersleeve, p. xii; cf. pp. xviii-xix, xxiii. — See also Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 105, 142, 158.

[56] The four sons were Gelon, the former ruler of Syracuse, victor at Himera, and Hieron, Polyzelus, and Thrasybulus.

Between his love for Thebes,[57] which had made common cause with the enemy, and his loyalty to the superior interests of Hellas, Pindar, as a poet called upon repeatedly, in all the years in which the struggle endured, to write in celebration of Aeginetans, Syracusans, Athenians, Thebans, and of their cities, must have been subjected to an incessant tension of the spirit which only his extraordinary integrity enabled him to sustain. As Croiset wrote (p. 253) in concluding his analysis of the attitudes that prevailed throughout Greece at this time, «On peut dire, je crois, que l'honneur de Pindare fut, à une époque où l'esprit de parti fit commettre tant de fautes et tant de crimes (surtout à Thèbes), d'avoir eu sur les questions alors discutées des vues théoriques assez modérées, assez exemptes de passion, pour que les lois essentielles du patriotisme aient gardé à ses yeux, même dans la pratique, toute leur clarté et toute leur force. Cela ne l'empêcha pas d'ailleurs d'incliner visiblement, en politique comme en tout le reste, vers les idées doriennes et aristocratiques».[58]

We shall see eventually that except for the period initiated by the outbreak of active religious warfare in France, these words of Croiset describe with considerable accuracy the position of moderation and tolerance that Ronsard adopted in the years immediately preceding the eruption of violence, a position to which he returned after the passions of the civil war had somewhat run their course.

VII. «J'ay veu guerres, debats, tantost tréves & paix» Ronsard and the Complexities of the Foreign and Civil Wars of France

There is hardly a reference to the Persian Wars in Ronsard's poetry, or to Darius or Xerxes who directed the expeditions against Greece. In the section of the *Ode de la Paix* which presents a scenario of the *Franciade* that Ronsard hoped to write, Laumonier (III, 16, n. 1) sees in the apparition before Andromache and Francus of the shade of Hector a reminiscence «de l'ombre de Darius, également évoquée par sa femme Atossa, dans les *Perses* d'Eschyle [619-622]».[59]

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[57] Cf. Croiset, pp. 259-261; Farnell, I, 138; II, 201, 208.

[58] Cf. Gildersleeve's judicious and forbearing comments on Pindar and the Persian Wars, pp. xi-xii. — Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 100-104, 158, describes the poet's aristocratic and political views, and their presence in, and influence on, his writings. Cf. Norwood, pp. 68-69, and Croiset, p. 259: «Il ignore les chefs de la démocratie: pas un d'eux ne figure dans ses poèmes ni dans ses fragments.»

[59] Commenting in the *Discours à Maistre Juliain Chauveau* on the ephemeral nature of empire, Ronsard asks:

«Qu'est devenu l'Empire d'Assyrie?
Du Mede & Grec?» (XV, 158)

As Henri II and Charles V gird for war,[60] Ronsard, in the *Prière à la Fortune*, calls upon the goddess to favor his king, since she is able to grant victory even to the leader of the lesser army:

> ...tesmoing en est l'histoire
> De ce grand Roy qui perdit la victoire
> Contre les Grecz, bien qu'aux champs il eust mis
> Un camp bien grand contre un peu d'ennemys...
> (VIII, 108)

Laumonier's note identifies the «grand Roy» as «Xerxès, vaincu par la flotte grecque à Salamine».

The several references to Carthage in Ronsard generally relate to the period of the Punic Wars and the two mentions of Etruria are simply synonyms for Italy. There is hardly an echo in Ronsard of Pindar's prayer to Zeus in the first Pythian that the battle-shout of the Carthaginians and Etruscans «may abide at home in peace», unless it be two verses of the *Avantentrée du Roi treschrestien à Paris* (1549), addressed to Henri II:

> Facent les cieus que ta puissance greve
> Si bien l'Anglois, que plus il ne releve...
> (I, 23)

If the parallel seems fragile, it may receive some support from the fact that by 1549 Ronsard had studied and employed the first Pythian, one of his favorites, with some assiduity.[61] A passage in the ninth Nemean (28-29), another ode with which Ronsard was well acquainted from the earliest period of his Pindaric studies, contains a similar prayer to Zeus to defer as long as possible the trial for life or death against the Phoenician spears.

What may justify a comparison of the attitudes of Pindar and Ronsard during the respective periods of foreign and civil wars which they experienced can thus in no manner depend on their reflections on ancient historical or political events, but rather on their reactions to the particular situations and conditions of their times which possessed similarly complex characteristics. These involved an endless fluctuation of interests among governments of states and city-states, internal conflicts of parties and classes, and profoundly irrational contradicitons in the implementation of national policy.[62] Accord-

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[60] See Lemonnier, pp. 179-181, for an epitome of the relations between France and Charles V from the time he inherited the crown of Spain (1516) and received the imperial crown in 1519, until 1559.

[61] See I, 24-25 and 25, n. 1; I, 162-163 and 163, n. 1.

[62] In the struggle against Charles V, François I[er], between 1526 and 1530, «manqua d'esprit de suite», demonstrated «son habituelle inconsistance», was compromised, as a Catholic king, in forming alliances with «puissances schismatiques ou hérétiques», and with the Turks (Lemonnier, p. 180).

ing to Lucien Romier, this was already in evidence in France before the Reformation was stabilized. The addition of a divisive religious dimension, almost totally absent from the history of the Persian and Carthaginian Wars, must have increased exponentially the complexities of relationships among the contending forces in the France and Europe of Ronsard's time.[63] «Il n'est pas de mouvement historique plus divers», says Romier (II, 225), «plus complexe par ses origines, ses forces intimes et ses éclats, aussi bien il n'en est pas de plus national ou local que celui de la Réforme française, tel qu'on peut le surprendre avant la constitution ferme des églises et l'explosion des guerres civiles, qui firent tomber tant de rameaux.»

In Ronsard's poems, from first to last, the Turks were the nation whose position with respect to France, and indeed to most of Europe, roughly corresponded to that of Persia and Carthage in relation to the Greeks of Pindar's time. To the Turkish peril François de La Noue devoted the twenty-second of his *Discours politiques et militaires* (Basle, 1587), entitled: *Que les princes chrestiens estans bien unis ensemble peuvent en quatre ans chasser les Turcs de l'Europe*. In the year that saw the publication of the first posthumous edition of Ronsard's poetry, La Noue, who had embraced Protestantism in 1558,[64] published his account of the beginning and growth «de ce tyrannique & impitoyable empire turquesque» which threatened to place both Catholics and Protestants of the Occident «sous son insupportable joug».[65] This had been the theme of very many passages in Ronsard's poetry urging Christendom to unite against the menace of Turkish and Islamic expansionism,[66] dangerous not only to the survival of their religion and rule, but leading to the destruction of the Hellenic intellectual and cultural legacy of Europe.

Unfortunately, some of the Christian princes acted in a spirit closely resembling that of the ancient Greeks, who did not hesitate to medize or phoenicize when their immediate overriding interests differed from those of their fellow Greeks. «The frenzied appeal [of François I[er]], without pang of

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[63] See, for example, Pineaux, p. 127: «Sous le règne des derniers Valois, l'attitude des Protestants fut commandée par deux impératifs contradictoires: fidélité à la Royauté comme Chrétiens et comme sujets, nécessité pratique de prendre les armes contre la puissance royale. D'où le paradoxe apparent: des soldats armés contre celle-ci, et qui prient Dieu pour le jeune roi [Charles IX].» — Odet de Coligny, Cardinal de Chastillon, «caused a sensation in 1561 by becoming 'the Protestant cardinal', for he did not at once resign his papal title.» T.M. Parker in *NCMH*, III, 92.

[64] *DLF: SS*, p. 418, col. 2.

[65] F.E. Sutcliffe, ed., *François de La Noue: Discours politiques et militaires* (Geneva, 1967), p. 438. See also James J. Supple's article, «François de La Noue's 'Plan for a Campaign against the Turks», *BHR*, XLI (1979), 273-291.

[66] See Malcolm C. Smith's edition of the *Discours des miseres*, pp. 35-36.

conscience, to the Sultan Sulaimān on the morrow of Pavia [24 February 1525]... and the subsequent unleashing of the Turkish marauders across Hungary even to the very gates of Vienna — these were so many indirect blows against the body of Germany.»[67] After the Peace of Cambrai (3 August 1529) the Catholic king François and his minister Montmorency were in collusion with the secret or open enemies of Charles V, including Lutherans, Turks, and the Pope (Lemonnier, p. 71). «Lorsque l'Empereur... mit [François] en demeure de défendre la Chrétienté contre les ennemis de la foi, il usa de faux-fuyants, refusant d'accorder des secours d'argent...» (*ibid.*, p. 73). These examples of co-operation between the French and the Turks could easily be multiplied (*ibid.*, pp. 78, 111), but perhaps the most startling was the decision by François Ier, for reasons of naval strategy, «de mettre Toulon à la disposition des troupes de Kheir-ed-Din. Les habitants reçurent l'ordre de quitter la ville, personnes et biens, sous peine de la hart». The occupation lasted six months (*ibid.*, p. 112).

Under Henri II the coalition with the Ottomans began to weaken, although by the truce of Vaucelles with Charles V, 5 February 1556, France did not expressly renounce her alliance with the Turks.

Ronsard's attitude, as a humanist deeply influenced by his studies of the Greek authors, seems to have been years in advance of the policy that Henri II ultimately adopted toward the Turks. «George de Trébizonde et Ronsard se ressemblent en ceci que tous deux ont pour les Turcs la haine de l'humaniste, qui ne leur pardonnera jamais d'avoir détruit l'Empire Grec, brûlé les bibliothèques, anéanti la culture dans tout l'Orient.»[68] As early as 1546, while François Ier was still on the throne, Ronsard, in *A Dieu pour la famine*, prays that the hunger then raging in France be inflicted instead

> Ou bien sus les Tartares,
> Turcs, Scytes, & Barbares...
> (II, 186)

Almost a half-century before François de La Noue, Ronsard, in *Les Isles fortunées*, warned the people of a divided Europe against the peril:

> Peuple chetif, qui ses forces hasarde
> Contre soi-mesme, & qui, sot, ne prend garde
> Que ce grand Turc, helas, ne faudra pas
> Bien tôt aprés de talonner ses pas...
> (V, 176; cf. XVIII, 469)

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[67] F.C. Spooner in *NCMH*, II, 212.

[68] Perdrizet, p. 95.

In *La Paix, au Roy*, composed in 1559 when Henri II was turning away from the Turkish alliance, Ronsard sought to convince the king of the suicidal danger of the wars that Christian rulers visited upon each other, while Greece sickened under the Ottoman yoke:

> Il vaudroit mieux chasser le Turc hors de la Grece,
> Qui miserable vit soubz le joug de detresse...
> (IX, 114)

To Charles IX he writes with even greater urgency in 1565:

> ... cette Grece, œil du monde habitable,
> Qui n'eut jamais, ny n'aura de semblable,
> Demande helas! vostre bras treschrestien
> Pour de son col deserrer le lien,
> Lien barbare, impitoyable, & rude,
> Qui tout son corps genne de servitude
> Souz ce grand Turc, qui presque de l'esprit
> Du peuple Grec a chassé Jesus-Christ...
> (XIII, 138; cf. XV, 283-284)

Ronsard's *Discours ou Dialogue entre les Muses deslogées, & Ronsard*, published in 1584 in the *Bocage Royal*, was the poet's final and most moving intercession with French royalty on behalf of the Muses, driven from Greece by the conquering Turk. The divinities ostensibly address Ronsard, but in reality, of course, it is he who initiates and mediates their message to Henri III:

> Nous eusmes autrefois des habits precieux
> Mais le barbare Turc de tout victorieux,
> Ayant vaincu l'Asie & l'Afrique, & d'Europe
> La meilleure partie, a chassé nostre trope
> De la Grece natale, & fuyant ses prisons
> Errons, comme tu vois, sans biens & sans maisons,
> Où le pied nous conduit, pour voir si sans excuses
> Les peuples & les Rois auront pitié des Muses.
> (XVIII, 91-92)[69]

Christendom was deeply shaken by the Franco-Turkish alliance of the Catholic kings, but perhaps no more than France itself was unnerved by the relations of French Protestants with foreign powers. At a time when Henri II would inevitably see in the organized activities of the Huguenots an aggres-

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[69] For other passages in which Ronsard urges reconciliation between Christian nations and religious sects in the interest of uniting against the Turk, see VIII, 139; IX, 17-18, 115; X, 356-357; XI, 51; XIII, 133-134, 272. — In justice, however, one must add that Ronsard's attitude toward the Turks was not uniformly negative. See, for example, XI, 63, 65, 96; XII, 183; in all of which Ronsard presents aspects of Islamic piety and faith which Christians might do well to emulate. — See Cl.D. Rouillard, *The Turk in French History* (Paris, 1947), Index, s.v. *Ronsard*.

sion against the state, «La prudence était commandée aux protestants français surtout dans leurs rapports avec l'étranger. Les chefs montrèrent à cet égard un aveuglement extraordinaire» (Romier, II, 227). This attitude, which led the Protestants of France to invite military aid from abroad, elicited the following verses from Ronsard in 1562:

> L'autre jour en pensant que cette pauvre terre
> S'en alloit (ô malheur) la proye d'Angleterre,
> Et que ses propres fils amenoient l'estranger
> Qui boit les eaux du Rhin, à fin de l'outrager...
> (XI, 54)

One thinks again of the Theban oligarchs who «contracted strong bonds»[70] with the Persians, and of the inhabitants of Himera «whose invitation brought the Carthaginians to Sicily».[71] But in truth the Huguenots were not alone in opening the borders of France to foreign troops. Those who drank the waters of the Rhine were the invited German soldiery. «Les chefs protestants faisaient un appel direct aux reîtres et lansquenets allemands. Il y en avaient aussi dans l'armée royale un grand nombre, appartenant à la confession catholique.»[72]

Religious dissension and all the other evils that had befallen France had their root, according to Ronsard, in a foreigner, the German Luther:

> Tout va de pis en pis: les Citez qui vivoient
> Tranquilles ont brisé la foy qu'elles devoient:
> Mars enflé de faux zele & de veine aparence
> Ainsi qu'une furie agite nostre France,
> Qui farouche à son prince, opiniastre suit
> L'erreur d'un estranger, qui folle la conduit.
> (XI, 29)

But so great was the confusion of national policy that «Marchands ou soldats, propagateurs actifs des doctrines luthériennes et de la pensée libre, les étrangers procuraient au Roi les moyens indispensables pour la lutte [contre Charles V], de l'argent et des troupes» (Romier, II, 252).

The fear of a foreign presence on French soil remains at the end of Ronsard's life one of his greatest anxieties:

> ...ah! que de fiers gendarmes,
> Ah! que de feux, que d'horribles alarmes!
> Que de pitié! que de sang! que de morts!
> Que d'estrangers ancreront à nos ports!
> (XVIII, 321)

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[70] Finley, *art. cit.* (above, n. 34), p. 122.

[71] R. Hackforth, *op. et loc. cit.* (above, n. 54).

[72] Note by Laumonier, XI, 54, n. 2.

The fluctuating relations with Germans and Austrians of both Catholic and Protestant persuasions, almost bewildering in the shifting instability and apparent absence of principle[73] of the participants to the negotiations, were probably the most crucial foreign connections in the evolution of the religious wars in France. «Freedom of thought, condoned and encouraged about the year 1520, opened the whole country to the gusts and flurries of the German Reformation.»[74] After the conclusion of the Protestant League of Smalkald in 1531, François Ier sent Guillaume du Bellay to the members of the confederacy to promise the help of France «pour la défense de la liberté germanique...» (Lemonnier, p. 72). In 1557, Ferdinand, the Holy Roman Emperor, in a letter to his nephew, Philipp II of Spain, «parlait de l'assistance prêtée à Henri II par l'électeur Palatin»[75] (*ibid.*, p. 166), but in the second of the religious wars in France (1567-1568), «The Elector Palatine[76] sent his son, John Casimir, with German *reîtres*... to help the Huguenots». By the Treaty of Longjumeau (23 March 1568), Charles IX «agreed to pay off the *reîtres*».[77]

We shall not enter into the intricacies of the diplomatic and military relationships between France and Italy,[78] Spain,[79] and England,[80] or between France and various constellations of powers with whom she treated simultaneously. From the point of view of the complexity of these associations, the German example sets the pattern for the rest in respect to both the Huguenot and Catholic causes. Nor shall we attempt to describe the endless rivalries, during the reign of Henri II, between Montmorency and the House of Guise,[81] between the latter and the Bourbons,[82] between the aristocracy and

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[73] Romier, II, 262, refers to «Le défaut de scrupules qu'avaient montré le gouvernement de François Ier et davantage celui de Henri II, jusqu'à l'année 1557, en utilisant contre la maison d'Autriche les forces du protestantisme germanique et des hérétiques anglais, tandis que dans le royaume on exécutait brutalement les réformés...». Cf. Lemonnier, p. 157.

[74] F.C. Spooner in *NCMH*, II, 212, who refers in a note to W.G. Moore, *La Réforme allemande et la littérature française* (Strassburg, 1930). The references to Ronsard in this work are, however, very infrequent.

[75] Otto Henry, Elector, 1556-1559.

[76] Frederick III, Elector from 1559 to 1576, embraced Calvinism in 1561.

[77] H.G. Koenigsberger in *NCMH*, III, 287.

[78] See Lemonnier, pp. 76-78, 144, 159, 165, 179, and especially p. 181 on the Italian campaigns under Louis XII, François Ier, and Henri II: «on aura surtout sous les yeux le spectacle de l'incohérence.»

[79] See Romier, II, 291-293; Lemonnier, pp. 167-168, 169-170; T.M. Parker and H.G. Koenigsberger in *NCMH*, III, 52, 259.

[80] See Lemonnier, pp. 74-76; H.G. Koenigsberger in *NCMH*, III, 256.

[81] See Lemonnier, pp. 125-129, 135, 176-177; cf. T.M. Parker in *NCMH*, III, 94.

[82] See J. Hurstfield and H.G. Koenigsberger in *NCMH*, III, 132, 283.

the humbler classes,[83] dissensions which added serious elements of incoherence to a national policy already fatally deficient in self-consistency. Much later, after the Peace of Monsieur (1576), «Where the Huguenots looked to Geneva for spiritual guidance and to England and the Protestant princes of Germany for material help, the Leaguers looked to Rome and to the Catholic rulers of Spain and Savoy. Thus all revolutionary movements of the period were linked to powers and interests outside their national boundaries».[84]

The broad resemblance to the fragmented policies of the city-states of Greece during the time of Pindar is readily apparent. The appeals to foreign powers were in both cases external manifestations of an internal problem: in Greece, civil dissension within city-states or between sister states generally sharing the same language, the same culture and religion, but differing fundamentally in political ideals; in France, civil war within a relatively homogeneous population, profoundly divided by religious convictions that were intricately intertwined with their political expression.

Perhaps it is possible to speak of two phases of the internal and external aspects of the military situation in France throughout much of the sixteenth century. Until the signing of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis on 3 April 1559, Henri II, and before him, François I^er^, were able, between intervals of more or less severe repression, to tolerate the activities of the Huguenots as an exasperating preoccupation, to be sure, but not without compensatory features in attracting the assistance of Protestant princes as they pursued visions of external conquest.

The signing of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis resulted from the compelling necessity, increasingly felt by Henri II and Montmorency, to confront the disintegrating internal politico-religious situation in France[85] even if it meant paying an extraordinarily heavy price in territorial concessions to Philip II. «The war abroad could scarcely end, they thought at Geneva and among the Protestants, without opening the sluice-gates of civil war. 'Si le Roi', wrote Macar to Calvin on 17 August 1558, 'obtient la paix, il engagera, comme il l'affirme, toute son âme et tous ses biens dans une guerre contre les *luthériens* pour détruire jusqu'à la racine et leur race et leur nom'.» Exactly two months after Cateau-Cambrésis, «On 2 June 1559 war was declared on Protestantism by the Edict of Ecouen which declared 'nous ne voullons aul-

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[83] See Lemonnier, p. 149: «La ville [Metz, in 1552] était fort travaillé de discordes et assez anarchique, le menu peuple étant *comme partout à cette époque* hostile à l'aristocratie gouvernante» (my emphasis).

[84] H.G. Koenigsberger in *NCMH*, III, 292.

[85] «Le soulèvement des Protestants», says Laumonier (XI, p. v), «avait tous les caractères d'une révolution politique autant que d'une réforme religieuse.» Cf. XI, 26-27, 46, 89.

cunement estre troublés par les damnés [*sic*] entreprises des hérecticques ennemys de nostre dicte foy et religion'»[86]

In this civil war on Protestantism the themes that had been evoked by Pindar in his reflections on the discord that had shaken the Greek cities — his hatred of factional strife, his fear of the excessive ambitions of individuals and parties aspiring to arbitrary or tyrannical rule, his deep-rooted Hellenic conviction that the moderating influence of Apollo and the Muses could foster tranquillity in the state, his despair when the forces of sedition seemed certain to bring ungovernable disaster — these themes, prompted by situations not dissimilar from those that Pindar had known, spontaneously reappear in the poetry of Ronsard as the government of France de-emphasizes external interests in order to devote the national resources to the attempt to liquidate internal dissensions.

In 1569, in the *Discours... à Chauveau*, whose title was significantly transformed in 1584 to read *Discours de l'alteration & change des choses humaines*, Ronsard recognized how either external or internal forces can destroy a kingdom. He had by then, in fact, witnessed for decades the baneful effects of their simultaneous operation in his own country:

> Ainsi advient aux Sceptres qui se rompent,
> Qui par dedans ou dehors se corrompent,
> Par le dehors, quand un Prince estranger
> Vient à main forte en armes outrager:
> Par le dedans, quand les guerres civilles
> De factions brulent le cœur des villes,
> Quand la Noblesse & le peuple sans foy,
> Tout desbridé fait la guerre à son Roy..
> (XV, 162)

The «Prince estranger» might be a Charles V or a Philipp II whose «main forte» was raised in retaliation for initiatives, real or imagined, taken against him. The menace to the established regime could be far greater when neither foreigner nor prince threatened, when factional or sectarian ideology was indigenous and popular, «D'un Zvingle, ou d'un Calvin (hommes seditieux)» (X, 353). The danger was intensified, says Ronsard, by the instability of Christian faith, which led to a seditious denial of the authority of the Church:

> Mais qui serait le Turc, le Juif, le Sarrasin,
> Qui voyant les erreurs du Chrestien son voisin,
> Se voudroit baptiser? le voyant d'heure en heure
> Changer d'opinion, qui jamais ne s'asseure?
> Le cognoissant leger, mutin, seditieux,
> Et trahir en un jour la foy de ses ayeux?...

[86] F.C. Spooner in *NCMH*, II, 225.

Le voyant Manichée, & tantost Arrien,
Tantost Calvinien, tantost Lutherien,
Suivre son propre advis, non celuy de l'Eglise?
(XI, 65)

In a justly famous passage he reminds Théodore de Bèze that in advancing the religious cause of his sect he betrays his motherland and commits a political act of sedition and *lèse-majesté*:

Ne presche plus en France une Evangile armée,
Un Christ empistollé tout noircy de fumée,
Portant un morion en teste, & dans la main
Un large coustelas rouge du sang humain:
Cela desplaist à Dieu, cela deplaist au Prince,
Cela n'est qu'un appas qui tire la province
A la sedition, laquelle desoubs toy
Pour avoir liberté, ne vouldra plus de Roy.
(XI, 42)

«Las! Madame», he says to Catherine de Médicis, regent during the minority of Charles IX, as he urges her to take control of the country

... en ce temps que le cruel orage
Menace les François d'un si piteux naufrage,
Que la gresle & la pluye, & la fureur des cieux
Ont irrité la mer de vens seditieux...
(XI, 21; cf. XVII, 77, vv. 287-288)

The complexities and instability of the French political situation at this time (1562) may be judged from Laumonier's note on the passage: «Ronsard ressentait le besoin de supplier ainsi Catherine de Médicis... parce qu'elle avait eu en 1561 et avait encore de multiples complaisances pour les huguenots et qu'elle recherchait l'appui des princes luthériens d'Allemagne pour le cas où Charles IX changerait de religion. Son aversion pour les Guises (le capitaine François et le cardinal Charles) pouvait la conduire à l'abjuration et à une guerre contre son gendre Philippe II et son beau-frère Philibert de Savoie...»

The tragic irony of this uneasy posture of national affairs, visible in the divided state of mind of the governing power of France, was to issue ten years later, when the winds of doctrine, the «vens seditieux», had veered full circle, and Catherine, in concert with the detested Guises, instigated the Saint Bartholomew massacre of the Protestants, while simultaneously giving the hand of her daugter in marriage to Henri de Navarre, the Protestant leader and eventual king of France. Well might Ronsard find sedition, latent in the mind and heart of Catherine, reflected in «un peuple mutin divisé de courage» (XI, 22). Divided as only a profound factional struggle can disjoin a people from itself:

Ce monstre[87] arme le fils contre son propre pere,
Et le frere (ô malheur) arme contre son frere,
La sœur contre la sœur, & les cousins germains
Au sang de leurs cousins veullent tremper leurs mains,
L'oncle fuit son nepveu, le serviteur son maistre,
La femme ne veut plus son mary recognoistre,
Le enfans sans raison disputent de la foy,
Et tout à l'abandon va sans ordre & sans loy.
(XI, 28; cf. XI, 81)

In immoderate ambition Pindar had seen the cause of civic unrest, «faction, that manifest woe» (frag. 210, p. 611). For Ronsard, the ideology of Protestantism, which he personified as «l'Opinion, peste du genre humain» (XI, 26), was nothing but a hypocritical cover for the quite different impelling motivation of its practitioners:

Son cueur estoit couvé de veine affection,
Et soubs un pauvre habit cachoit l'ambition.
(XI, 27)

In reply to two Protestant *Surveillants*[88] who had reproached Ronsard for questioning the evangelical sincerity of Théodore de Bèze, «Ayant de soubs un raistre [long cloak] une espée au costé» (XI, 44), the poet enlarges upon his accusation that the religious pretentions of the Huguenots are but a cloak for less avowable promptings:

Vous ressemblés à ceux que les fiebvres incensent,[89]
Qui cuydent dire vray de tout cela qu'ils pensent:
Toutesfois la pluspart de vos Rhetoriqueurs[90]
Vous preschent autrement qu'ils n'ont dedans les cœurs.
L'un monte sur la chaire ayant l'ame surprise
D'extresme ambition, l'autre de convoitise,
L'autre qui se voit pauvre est aise d'en avoir,
L'autre qui n'estoit rien de monter en pouvoir...
(XI, 46)

Though Ronsard, in this period of polemical contention, was often carried away by partisan zeal, he retained sufficient balance and candor to recognize that the religious establishment to which he belonged and had undertaken to defend, exhibited some of the same blemishes that he attributed to its Huguenot adversaries. He urges the shepherds of the Church assembled at the Council of Trent to make war upon the wolves that are destroying them inwardly, and first of all, ambition:

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[87] «Opinion nourrice des combats» (XI, 26, v. 125).

[88] Laumonier (XI, 44, n. 3) explains, after Cl. Garnier, «Ainsi les huguenots qualifient leurs espions».

[89] «Rendent insensés.» Note by Laumonier.

[90] «Ici le synonyme de rhéteurs ou sophistes.» Note by Laumonier.

O vous, doctes Prelats, poussés du S. Esprit,
Qui estes assemblés au nom de Jesuschrist,
Et taschés sainctement par une voye utile
De conduire l'Eglise à l'accord d'un Concile,
Vous mesmes les premiers, Prelats, reformés vous,
Et comme vrays pasteurs faittes la guerre aux loups,
Ostés l'ambition, la richesse excessive,
Arrachés de vos cueurs la jeunesse lascive...
(XI, 85-86)

In the score of passages which refer to Calvin personally or to Calvinism, Ronsard never warns the austere Genevan leader against these and other similar wolves that are consuming the body of the Church — with one exception — his ambition, undoubtedly because it threatens to lay waste the body of both the Church and the state:

Tu dis[91] que j'ay blasmé cette teste Calvine,
Je ne le blasme pas, je blasme sa doctrine,
Quand à moy je le pense un trompeur, un menteur,
Tu le penses un ange, un apostre, un docteur,
L'apellant la lumiere & l'honneur des fidelles:
Si tu l'estimes tant, porte luy des chandelles:
Il n'aura rien de moy, par toute nation
On cognoist son orgueil & son ambition.
(XI, 153)

During the period of peace between the first and second wars of religion Ronsard's mascarade *Les Sereines* was performed in 1564 at Fontainebleau. «The theme», says Francis M. Higman, «... is that the gods and spirits of nature had been driven into hiding in caves, rocks and underwater by the civil war...,»[92] for during the minority of Charles IX,

En lieu de paix, d'amour & de bonté
Vint la malice au visage ehonté,
Haines, discords & factions de villes,
Desir de sang les hommes fit armer,
L'ambition apres vint allumer
Le grand brazier des querelles civiles.
(XIII, 234)

In both factions, Ronsard tells us, ambition was the principle of the conflagration that was devouring France. One would not have to solicit history unduly to affirm that a «Christ empistollé» marched at the head of each of the contending sects. But this is only a partial view of Ronsard's theme at

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[91] Ronsard is replying to B. de Mont-Dieu, a pseudonym for Bernard de Montméja. See R. Lebègue in *L.*, XI, 194 (2e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*); cf. Jacques Pineaux, *La Polémique protestante contre Ronsard*, I, 31 and 86, v. 459.

[92] *Art. cit.* (above, n. 14), p. 282.

this moment. For the occasion of the mascarade he had no choice but to end upon a note of optimism. «In the new era of peace being ushered in by Charles IX and his mother», Francis Higman goes on to say, «they [the gods and the spirits of nature] are now returning to the face of the earth... The political fact of peace is shown to signify at a deeper level the harmony, in time of peace, between man and natural and supernatural forces.»

If ambition is for both Pindar and Ronsard the root principle of dissension in the state, μουσική, music, the lyre, is the ultimate source of «the love of law that hateth strife» (Pyth., V, 65-67). But this saving principle transcends the state — its relevance and validity are cosmic. «Pindar's poems», says Gildersleeve (p. 240), «are constellations... The Phorminx is the name of the constellation called the first Pythian... Apollo and the Muses are to the Greek the authors of all harmony, artistic, political, social, spiritual. The lyre, as the instrument of Apollo, is the symbol of the reign of harmony over the wide domain of Zeus.»

In *A sa lire* of 1550 Ronsard had entered deeply into the possession of this truth long before the outbreak of the civil wars:

> Celui n'est pas le bien aimé des Dieux
> A qui deplaist ton chant melodieux
> Heureuse lire honneur de mon enfance...
> (I, 163)

In the crisis of French religious and political life he could not forget the divinities of music. He was indifferent to the possibility that his fidelity to them might invite his Protestant antagonists to denounce his «pagan» tendencies. Convinced that he had espoused the just cause, he called upon his fellow poets to join him in the effort:

> Et vous sacré troupeau, sacrés mignons des Muses,
> Qui avés au cerveau les sciences infuses,
> Qui faittes en papier luire vos noms icy,
> Comme un Soleil d'esté de rayons esclarcy:
> De nostre jeune Prince escrivés la querelle
> Et armés Apollon & les Muses pour elle.
> (XI, 90)

The great message of the first Pythian — «All the beings that Zeus hath not loved are terrified when they hear the voice of the Pierides» (13-14) — may have brought Ronsard a sense of vindication when, transported by polemical ardor, he attacked the Huguenot poetasters who had accused him of never having felt the vehemence of the Muse's inspiration:

> Tels ne furent jamais les versificateurs,
> Qui ne sont seulement que de mots inventeurs,
> Froids, grossiers, & lourdaux, comme n'ayant saisie
> L'ame d'une gentille & docte frenaisie:

Tel bien ne se promet aux hommes vicieux,
Mais aux hommes bien nés, qui sont aymés des cieux.
(XI, 161-162)

In the period between the battles of Salamis and Plataea Pindar experienced moments bordering on desperation[93] at the inexorable unfolding of the complexities of the circumstances confronted by Thebes: internally, in respect of the irreconcilable divisions between the oligarchs and the democratic party; externally, as the complicities between the oligarchs and the Persian invader were being consummated. It was when «the stone of Tantalus, intolerable for Hellas», had been turned aside at Plataea by one of the gods, that Pindar, in joyful but guardedly cautious assessment, was able, in the eighth Isthmian, to take the full measure of what had happened: «As for me, the passing away of terror hath caused stern care to cease; yet it is better to look evermore at that which lieth before one's foot, for man is entangled in a treacherous time that maketh crooked the path of life. Yet even this may be healed for mortals, if only they have freedom» (11-16).

Of Pindar's joy at this moment Puech writes (IV, 71): «Elle est comme un cri de soulagement, qui s'exhale au sortir même de l'angoisse la plus terrible, et, si véhémente qu'elle soit, elle se contient; son accent reste grave et se nuance même de tristesse parce que le poète ne peut oublier le sort de sa propre patrie.»

For Ronsard and his coevals, Protestant and Catholic alike, the terror and the anguish could never really cease, though they experienced periods of relief and relative tranquillity during intervals of truce. The poet died at the end of 1585, the year that saw the beginning of the longest and most severe of the religious wars, which did not end until 1589. But as early as 1560, after the Conspiracy of Amboise had been thwarted, some of the themes that were to become prominent in his later poems were already in evidence two years before the eruption of hostilities. Chief among these was his despondency at the sight of France turning her deadly arms against herself:

Las! pauvre France, helas! comme une opinion
Diverse a corrompu ta premiere union!
Tes enfans, qui devroyent te garder, te travaillent,
Et pour un poil de bouc[94] entre eulx mesmes bataillent,
Et comme reprouvez, d'un courage meschant
Contre ton estomac tournent le fer tranchant!
N'avions nous pas assez engressé la campaigne
De Flandres, de Piedmont, de Naples, & d'Espaigne

[93] See Finley (*art. cit.*, above, n. 34), p. 126.

[94] «Pour des vétilles théologiques — Ronsard traduit le *lana caprina* d'Horace [*Epistles*, I, xviii, 15]... par *poil de bouc.*» Raymond Lebègue, *Ronsard*, 5e éd. (1970), p. 88.

Et nostre propre sang, sans tourner les cousteaux
Contre toy, nostre mere, & tes propres boyaux?
(X, 356)

These lines appeared in the *Elegie à Guillaume des Autels*, but the following verses from the *Discours des miseres de ce temps. A la Royne mere du Roy*, composed in 1562, read like their inevitable sequel. The urgent invocation of the names of ancient kings and princes and military leaders of France was perhaps suggested to Ronsard because he was addressing the only royal person who then held the constitutional power to restore the country to a semblance of political stability:

Ha que diront là bas soubs les tombes poudreuses
De tant de vaillans Roys les ames genereuses!
Que dira Pharamond! Clodion, & Clovis!
Nos Pepins! nos Martels! nos Charles, nos Loys!
Qui de leur propre sang versé parmy la guerre,
Ont aquis à nos Roys une si belle terre?
Que diront tant de Ducs, & tant d'hommes guerriers
Qui sont morts d'une playe au combat les premiers,[95]
Et pour France ont souffert tant de labeurs extremes,
La voyant aujourd'huy destruite par nous mesmes?
(XI, 22)

In the *Remonstrance au peuple de France* of 1563,[96] four years after Cateau-Cambrésis, Ronsard's despair is deepened as he reveals in bitter irony his understanding of the necessary relationship, at this time in France, between the cessation of foreign conflicts and the kindling of domestic war:

Telle fureur n'est point aux Tygres ny aux Ours,
Qui s'entraiment l'un l'autre, & se donnent secours,
Et pour garder leur race en armes se remuent:
Les François seullement se pillent & se tuent,
Et la terre en leur sang bagnent de tous costés,
Afin que d'autre main ils ne soyent surmontés.
(XI, 88-89)

In numerous passages extending over almost the entire period of the civil wars Ronsard describes their horrors from personal experience, sometimes approximating the thought and language of Pindar. Such similarities almost certainly did not result from imitation. It was natural, however, that identical aspects of factional struggle should summon up the same vision of its disasters. Civil war, Croiset said (p. 254), was odious to Pindar, «une mauvaise nourrice pour la jeunesse qu'elle conduit au trépas», words which paraphrase and amplify the thought implied in Pindar's ἐχθρὰν κουροτρόφον,

[95] Possibly a reminiscence of Tyrtaeus (see above, n. 20) or of Pindar, Isth., VII, 35.

[96] Written about 1 December 1562 according to Laumonier, XI, p. xvi.

«a hostile nurse of youth» (frag. 109, p. 579). When Ronsard attempts to persuade Prince Louis de Condé, a leader of the Huguenot army, to desist from so pernicious a war, he recites a dismaying litany of the calamities it brings:

> Ha Prince, c'est assés, c'est assés guerroyé,
> Vostre frere par vous au sepulchre envoyé,[97]
> Les playes dont la France est par vous affligée,
> Et les mains des larrons dont elle est saccagée...
> L'extreme cruauté des meurtres & des flammes,
> La mort des jouvenceaux...
> (XI, 101-102; cf. XI, 171)

An eclipse of the sun on 17 February 478 or 30 April 463 B.C. inspired in Pindar verses which reveal his fear of war, foreign or civil: «Do you bear the sign of a coming war, or withering of the harvest? or depth of snow beyond measure, or the abomination of civil war?» (trans. Fränkel, p. 480). Among the misfortunes of the House of Valois enumerated in the *Tombeau de Tres-illustre Princesse Marguerite de France* (1575) is the anticipated onset of the civil war that had cast its shadow fourteen years earlier over the coronation of Charles IX:

> En pleurant il vestit sa dignité royale,
> Comme presagiant sa fortune fatale.
> Car si tost qu'il fut Roy (il le fut à dix ans)
> La peste des meschans seducteurs mesdisans,
> La licence du peuple & la fureur des villes,
> Troublerent son estat de cent guerres civilles:
> Comme un terrible orage eslevé par le vent,
> Qui se va boursouflant, reculant, & suyvant,
> Onde sur onde espaisse, en tortis retrainée,
> Ou comme une Megere aux enfers deschaisnée,
> Tout se rua sur luy: Le Soleil de despit
> Abominant la Terre, en vestit noir habit...[98]
> (XVII, 76-77)

VIII. «A peaceful day, the Sun's own child»

The first Nemean ode for Chromius of Aetna, who claimed descent from Heracles,[99] was probably performed in 476 after the Greeks of East and West

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[97] «Le texte reproduit par Laumonier ne se trouve qu'en 1563 dans l'exemplaire de la B. nat.: Ronsard a aussitôt renoncé à rendre Condé responsable de la mort de son frère.» R. Lebègue, *L.*, XI, 188 (2e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*). — See the variant: Vostre frere *avant l'age*... Cf. Jean Baillou's edition of the *Discours des miseres*... (1949), p. 50, n. 1, and M.C. Smith's edition (1979), p. 142, crit. appar.

[98] «Il y eut une éclipse de soleil le 21 août 1560; l'avènement de Charles IX eut lieu le 5 décembre de la même année.» Note by Laumonier.

[99] Sandys, p. 314.

had repulsed the Persian and Carthaginian attacks. The myth that Pindar narrates in this ode is the first exploit of the infant Heracles, his victorious struggle against the two serpents sent by Hera to destroy him. But the narrative is prolonged by Teiresias' prophecy of the heroic deeds that Heracles was destined to accomplish. The parallel that the poet wishes to draw between the mythic hero and his descendant is clear: «Disons...,» Puech writes (III, 22), «que la vie héroïque d'Héraclès, digne tout entière de son premier combat, symbolise admirablement toute la vie héroïque de Chromios... l'une et l'autre aboutissent après tant de fatigues, à la félicité parfaite.» The ode concludes with Teiresias' assurance that Heracles «shall have allotted to him, as his choicest prize, peace that would endure forever in the homes of bliss» (70-71).

That Pindar should have conceived of enduring peace as the choicest of prizes must appear almost inevitable in a poet who instinctively equated the arts of Apollo and the Muses with the arts of peace, and who had for so long, together with his fellow Greeks, experienced protracted warfare in such anxious circumstances. How profoundly attached Pindar was to peace one may infer from the second Olympian, performed, like the first Nemean, in 476, which broods upon the thought that man cannot know «the time when we shall bring a peaceful day, the Sun's own child [ἡσύχιμον ἀμέραν, παῖδ' ἁλίου], to its close» (30-33), and describes the radiant life of eternal peace led by the righteous in the Islands of the Blest (61-83).

Twenty years later, after the battle of Oenophyta in the autumn of 457 B.C., in which the Thebans were defeated by the Athenians, Pindar finds consolation in the fact that Strepsiades, his fellow Theban, for whom the seventh Isthmian ode was written,[100] had been victorious in the pancratium. The poet looks forward to a time of tranquillity after storm: «I shall sing with my hair entwined with garlands, while I only pray that the envy of the immortals may not mar whatever pleasure I pursue, sufficient for my day, as I pass onward in peace to old age and to the destined bourne of life» (37-42).

Peace is a public blessing and a private felicity. The light of peace, Pindar thought, would shine for him who gave tranquillity to the community of citizens (frag. 109, p. 579). Possibly with «an oblique reference», as Gildersleeve suggests (p. 362), «to the men who were carrying things with a high

[100] The majority of commentators, according to Sandys, pp. 488-489, are in agreement that it was composed in 456. To the names listed by Sandys — Boekh, Dissen, Fennell, Schröder, and Wilamowitz — may be added those of Farnell (II, 371) and Méautis (p. 275), while Bowra opts for 454 (?). Puech (IV, 18) does not assign a specific date, but holds that «l'ode appartient à une période déjà avancée de la carrière du poète». David C. Young, *Pindar Isthmian 7, Myth and Exempla* (Leiden, 1971), p. 12, believes that it is impossible to assign «any approximate date».

hand at Thebes in 478 B.C.», Pindar writes to the Theban Thrasydaeus in Pythian XI: «I am eager for those virtues that serve the folk. So are the envious thwarted, if anyone, who hath won the highest place and dwelleth in peace, avoideth fell insolence» (54-56).

Little is known of the Sicilian Psaumis of Camarina who in 452 won the chariot-race at Olympia, but the little that Pindar tells us of him in the fourth Olympian gives us an insight into his character and confirms what we know of Pindar's strong tendency to associate the peace of the individual with that of the commonwealth: «I praise one... who in pure heart devoteth himself to Peace that loveth the State» (13-16). The individual may be a citizen of modest rank, like Psaumis, or, like Hieron, the leader of his people — for Pindar the principle is invariable: «O Zeus, that crownest all things, grant that the words of men may with truth assign no less good-fortune to citizens and kings alike... With thy blessing may he who himself is the leader... honour the people, and prompt them to concord and peace» (Pyth., I, 67-70).

The constituent elements of civic order are the theme of the overture of the thirteenth Olympian (464 B.C.) for Xenophon of «prosperous Corinth»: Within her walls dwelleth Law [Εὐνομία], and her sisters, the firm-set foundation of cities, even Justice [Δίκα] and Peace [Εἰρήνα] that is fostered beside her, those guardians of wealth for man, the golden daughters of Themis, who excelleth in counsel; and they are resolute in repelling Insolence, the bold-tongued mother of Surfeit» (6-10).

An understanding of Pindar's concept of the nature of Eirene, developing and elucidating a passage in Hesiod's *Theogony*, 901-903, must take cognizance of the symbolic significance of her indivisible sisterly relation to Eunomia and Dike, and to the meaning of their birth from the union of Olympian Zeus and Themis. The goddess, daughter of the marriage of Heaven (Ouranos) and Earth (Gaia), «personnification de la justice, ou de la Loi éternelle»,[101] was one of the race of Titans who preceded the dynasty of the Olympian gods. The Titans belonged «to a past so remote that the earliest Greeks of whose opinions we have any certain knowledge saw them surrounded with a haze of extreme antiquity».[102] Though Themis was one of the primeval gods who were vanquished when the land was occupied by the invading Greeks, she was admitted to the Olympian dynasty because of her

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[101] Grimal, p. 448, col. 1. — For Ronsard, as for Pindar, strong affinities united the concepts of Justice, Law, and Peace; see VIII, 95; XIII, 140, 233; XIV, 122; XV, 26; XVII, 26.

[102] H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*, p. 21. See also his article on Themis in *OCD*, p. 891, col. 2.

steadfast wisdom in counsel and as the divine embodiment of Justice, «la Justice primordiale», as Méautis calls her (p. 356). Her elevation to the Hellenic pantheon represented the recognition by a relatively advanced people of one of the most fundamental human values that must have given stability to the earlier autochthonous society.

Her daughters are the manifestation of qualities implicit in her nature. «L'*Eunomie*», says Croiset (pp. 254-255), [est le] bel ordre de la cité, [le] concert des volontés harmonieusement associées pour commander et pour obéir, sous l'empire souverain de la loi. L'*Eumonie* est une divinité bienfaisante. Elle donne aux cités qu'elle habite la richesse, la gloire et le salut. Elle a pour sœur la paix publique [Eirene], la concorde au brillant visage, qui fait croître les cités. Elle éloigne les dissensions funestes, la guerre entre les citoyens... Cet ordre harmonieux est fondé sur le respect de la loi, d'où résulte le droit. Pindare exprime poétiquement ces idées abstraites en disant qu'Eunomia est fille de Thémis et sœur de Dike.»

The eighth Pythian for Aristomenes of Aegina begins with an invocation to Hesychia, Tranquillity, Quietude, daughter of Dike. What intellectual qualities united, and yet distinguished these two from each other, and both from Themis?

Dike, Justice, issues naturally, but differs from, Themis, the primordial concept of Justice. Dike is justice administered among men, the justice of the courts. «Ἡσυχία, domestic tranquillity», says Gildersleeve (p. 328), «is eminently the daughter of right between man and man.» She is distinct, as much as consanguineous gods can be, from Eirene, who so often is Peace between state and state.

The ideas of these divinities may be abstractions, the divinities themselves are not.[103] On need only read the beginning of the eighth Pythian to realize that though Pindar may have been «the first to personify Ἡσυχία in Greek literature»,[104] he has endowed her with a dynamic vitality and a deeply perceived significance, more genuine, more real, than those of «objective» phenomena. Méautis had every reason to write (p. 357), «Le début de la *VIII^e^ Pythique* doit être étudié avec une suprême attention puisqu'il exprime le fond même de l'âme de Pindare».

The eighth Pythian, one may recall, is the last of the dated odes of Pindar that we possess. Composed in 446 when the poet had passed his seventieth year, it bears the remembered weight of the terrible experiences of the Per-

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[103] Cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 85; Méautis, p. 355, commenting on the name Hesychia: «Voilà, dira-t-on, une 'abstraction', rien ne serait plus faux...»

[104] Farnell, II, 192; cf. Méautis, p. 355, «Hésychie est une divinité créée par Pindare».

sian and Carthaginian Wars, now at a generation's distance; it has known the recent growth of Athenian power and the creation of the aggressive Athenian empire, which must have dilapidated Pindar's image of Athens as the bulwark of Hellas; it has endured the defeat of Thebes at Oenophyta in 457 (though redeemed ten years later at Coronea), a defeat which led to Thebes' «dependence on Athens... expressed in the obligation of furnishing contingents to her armies»;[105] and it reflects the conquest by Athens in 457-456 of Aegina, a second mother to Pindar after Thebes (98), and her enrollment as a subject state in the empire, compelled to pay heavy tribute to the conqueror.

To Pindar it may have seemed as though the «darkening months» between Salamis and Plataea threatened to return and with them the stone of Tantalus, suspended, this time, by Greeks over the head of Hellas. Gildersleeve (p. xxx) called the eighth Pythian «the Ecclesiastes of the odes», a view shared by Finley (p. 36): «Pindar's confidence in any tangible excellence or order in events is all but gone. The apocalyptic close of *P.* 8 states this sense of the vanity of things most clearly».

There is much in the ode to bear out these judgments, but they tend, I believe, to diminish Pindar's prophetic courage derived from his deepest experiences in poetry as the interpreter of the Apolline message, as well as from some of the very events which he had commemorated, and which brought him to this mood of despondency. The poem which begins with so tender and confident an invocation of Hesychia is surely not one from which all hope has fled. «In these abrupt, allusive, and deeply felt lines», Finley adds on a later page (87), «Quietude, Hesychia, has become an animate presence, herself embodying the inner character of harmony.»

Finley's sensitive translation and interpretation of the first triad (1-20) will best illustrate my meaning: «Loving-hearted Quietude, o child of Justice and strengthener of cities, you who hold the final keys of councils and wars, receive for Aristomenes this rite of honor for his Pythic crown. You understand with perfect tact alike the gift and the acceptance of gentle things. But when a man lays in his heart cold rancor, you harshly face the enemy's assault and scuttle his insolence. Porphyrion did not know you when he taunted you unprovoked. The gain alone is glad that comes from the house of a willing giver. Violence trips the vaunter in the end. Cilician Typhos, the hundred-headed, escaped this not, nor the monarch of the giants, but they fell before the thunderbolt [of Zeus] and Apollo's shafts, who welcomed with kindly heart from Cirrha home Xenarchus' son [Aristomenes] crowned with Parnassian green and with the Dorian song.»

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[105] J.B. Bury, *History of Greece*, I, 387.

Farnell (I, 130) is puzzled to identify the evil power symbolized by Porphyrion and Typhon. He asks whether it might not be Athens, who had destroyed Aegina's independence, but he is reluctant to think that Pindar would wish «to fit the cap of darkness on the head of any Hellenic state». Finley is less hesitant: «At the date of this poem», he says (p. 88), «[Porphyrion and Typhon] obviously signify Athens, not by a simple equation but by exemplifying the will to conquest by which Athens had been led to destroy what [Pindar] feels the benign older regimen of Greece.[106] He no longer recognizes the city which he knew as a young man and of whose performance at Salamis he wrote the famous dithyramb... When at the end it is Apollo who, with Zeus, destroys Porphyrion and the same god welcomes the victor home, it is clear that music and poetry continue for Pindar the sign of a more general harmony of act and impulse.» As it had been in 470 when he composed the first Pythian ode, harmony for Pindar is «an order in the world which showed itself in the beauty of act and became fully manifest in music as an ordering and divine principle» (Finley, p. 89).

The end of the eighth Pythian is indeed an apocalypse in which the invocation to Hesychia in the proem comes to utmost fruition in the only way accessible to mortals, as an alternation of joys and sorrows: «He who has won some beautiful new thing in his great luxuriance soars in hope on the wings of his strength, his heart beyond wealth. In a little time men's happiness waxes. So also it drops to the ground by some checking purpose shaken. Ephemerids. What is one? What is he not? A mortal is a shadow's dream. But when the Zeus-given radiance comes, a blazing glory rests on men and a honeyed life. Dear mother Aegina, in freedom's course lead on this city through Zeus and ruling Aeacus and Peleus and brave Telamon and through Achilles» (88-100, trans. Finley, pp. 173-174).

Hesychia is the Zeus-given radiance and the honeyed life, the fleeting moment when man brushes immortality. It is hardly possible to doubt that one of those moments of ineffable radiance, ephemeral as all human events are ephemeral, was the moment of the deliverance, ἐλευθερία, of Hellas, by the united struggle of Athens and Aegina, from the threat of servitude to the Persian despotism,[107] the moment, also, of the celebration of that deliverance in the eighth Isthmian ode. Just as certainly, the present moment of sorrow, as ephemeral as earlier joys, is dominated by the grievous realization that

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[106] «En 446, l'impérialisme d'Athènes devenait de plus en plus menaçant et l'on ne peut s'empêcher de penser que cet impérialisme est visé dans les allusions du poète à Porphyrion et à Typhon.» Méautis, p. 358.

[107] «Nimmt man dazu das Schlusswort, Bitte um Freiheit für Aigina, so muss man so viel wenigstens zugeben, dass die Freiheit und die Ruhe, die hier durchaus politisch gefasst sind, zusammengehören.» Wilamowitz, p. 443.

one of the participants in that great enterprise has now been cast under the dominion of the other. Pindar's closing prayer to the eponymous nymph Aegina, «in freedom's course [ἐλευθέρῳ στόλῳ] lead on this city through Zeus», is at once the shadow and the dream in which it is man's destiny to be forever engrossed.

IX. Peace, a Public Blessing (Εἰρήνα), a Private Felicity (Ἡσυχία)

Whoever would attempt to draw too fine a distinction between the concepts of *peace* and *tranquillity*, between *peace* as a public blessing and *quietude* as a private felicity, between εἰρήνα and ἡσυχία, might find himself entering into a semantic twilight. If he relied on passages in Pindar to refine the difference in meaning between εἰρήνα and ἡσυχία, he would discover verses in which, to his confusion, an adjectival form of ἡσυχία modifies εἰρήνα in a context relating to animals (Pyth., IX, 22-23). This is a realm in which an *esprit de finesse* is a desirable but insufficient companion.

When Slater's *Lexicon to Pindar* defines ἡσυχία as «*peace, quiet*... esp. rest from toil», the distinction between this word and εἰρήνα, defined simply as «*peace*», begins to emerge. It emerges more clearly when a more general lexicon, that of Liddell, Scott, and Stuart-Jones, defines εἰρήνα as «*peace, treaty of peace*», and ἡσυχία as «*rest, quiet, silence, stillness*». The distinction comes decisively into view in A. Bailly's *Dictionnaire grec-français*, which defines εἰρήνη as «paix, *p. opp. à* πόλεμος», and ἡσυχία as «tranquillité, calme, repos, *p. opp. à toute agitation physique ou morale*».

It has seemed desirable to bring out this distinction as fully as possible with regard to Pindar and Ronsard, who were so profoundly attached to peace and to the arts of peace, and yet found war an ineluctable lifelong reality. Both might have said with Sappho, «It is not meet to bring lamentation into a house that the Muses frequent».[108]

Though Pindar was a native of Thebes, to which he was drawn by the strongest filial bonds, his thought rises above local considerations. Within the limits imposed by his aristocratic convictions and his rejection of the λάβρος στρατός (Pyth., II, 87), Milton's «fierce democratie»,[109] his voice is that of a citizen of Hellas. His reflections on war and peace, determined by his deep-rooted hopes for the victory of Hellas over Persia and Carthaginia, were those of an individual capable of submerging the claims of faction and

[108] *Lyra Graeca*, I, 258, frag. 108.

[109] See Gildersleeve, p. 266.

even of birthplace in the wider cause of the Hellenic nation, which, in a political sense, had not yet found a unified national consciousness.

In the context of war and peace Ronsard's situation was possibly more complex than that of Pindar. No city-state claimed his allegiance — it belonged to France, a France which had indeed achieved a relatively unified national consciousness, but one that was in the process of being rent asunder by factional religious strife. After ephemeral youthful hesitations (XI, 75), there was no doubt in Ronsard's mind as to where he would take his stand. Religiously and politically he was anything but disinterested. Once the civil war had become inevitable, he professed only one faith and one king. He placed his allegiance in them, and his published thoughts on war and peace, whatever his ideas might have been in the forum of his conscience, were often not his own, but those of the controlling politico-religious power — Henri II, the Guises, Catherine de Médicis.

For Ronsard the complexities did not end there. Long before the outbreak of the civil war, and during its course interrupted by numerous intervals of «peace» —

> J'ay veu guerres, debats, tantost tréves & paix,
> Tantost accords promis, redefais & refais,
> Puis defais & refais.
> (XVIII, 37)

— even when he was not the official or semi-official spokesman for a vacillating authority, his comments on war and peace did not always represent his personal convictions. They were frequently dictated by concern for his own advancement, so that what he wrote was quite likely to be determined by what he knew or supposed to be agreeable to the sovereign or his surrogate. The result was not necessarily bad or insincere poetry. Some of his finest work was commissioned, and perhaps more often than not his views might independently coincide with those of the prince. But obviously if his verse on war and peace was at the mercy of the sometimes swift alternations of national policy, or governed by the hope of promoting his personal interest, it becomes hazardous to take his assertions at face value. On a subject of such fundamental importance one is well-advised to examine a sufficient number of his assertions over as long a time as possible to enable us to discern what his thoughts and feelings were when liberated from these extraneous or private constraints.

One of Ronsard's greatest poems on war and peace is the *Ode de la Paix* (1550), a Pindaric ode in ten triads and 500 verses. Since it is dedicated to Henri II in celebration of the conclusion of a treaty of peace between France

and England, the dominant emotion of the splendid prelude[110] is the nation's joy that after the horrors of war God,

> Par l'effort d'un bras souverain,
> A fait ravaller la tempeste,
> Et ardre alentour de ta teste
> Un air plus tranquille & serain.
> (III, 4)

Though Ronsard here seems to use the language of private address, and again when he says:

> Aussi mainte felicité
> Toi, Roi des peuples, environne...

it is of course clear that the king symbolically represents the nation as a whole:

> Toi seigneur de mainte cité
> Qui se courbe sous ta couronne...

and that the true beneficiaries of the peace are in the first place the people of France:

> Mais ce bien qu'ores tu nous fais
> Veut qu'on t'adore d'avantage,
> Pour avoir fait reverdir l'age,
> Où florissoit l'antique paix.
> (III, 5)

X. Ronsard's Ambivalence toward Peace: A Structural Defect of the *Ode de la Paix*

The *Ode de la Paix* narrates two myths — that of Peace as the Creator of the universe and of mankind, and that of Francus as the eponymous founder of France and of the succession of its royal dynasties. The first myth is introduced immediately after the prelude and occupies no more than 36 verses (33-68). The other begins at the end of the second antistrophe (v. 85) and continues for 202 verses.

It was not the unusual magnitude of the ode that made the two myths necessary or dictated their relative disproportionate length, but rather Ronsard's real purpose in writing it, which was to solicit a royal subvention on behalf of the proposed national epic, the *Franciade*. The myth of Peace, ostensibly of primary concern, given the nature of Ronsard's professed subject, was thus dismissed in less than a triad, for it was but the occasion, not

[110] For the textual relations between the preludes of the *Ode de la Paix* and Pindar's fifth Pythian, see *POR*, pp. 82-84.

the cause, of the *Ode de la Paix*. The true center of Ronsard's interest was the myth of Francus and the benefit he might legitimately receive by exploiting it.

This imbalance in the attention accorded to the two myths is incongruous enough in an ode nominally intended as a glorification of Peace. The incongruity is compounded by the incompatible character of the myths themselves and by the paradoxical transition that Ronsard has imagined between them in the second antistrophe. Zeus seats (Fit soir) Peace on a throne beside him and thrusts (a bouté) Mars into another:

> De l'un jadis il honora
> Les vieus peres du premier age,[111]
> Et de l'autre il aigrit la rage
> Contre Ilion que devora
> EPODE [2]
> Le feu Grec, quand mille naus
> Grosses d'horreur & de pene
> Enfanterent mille maus
> Au bord Troien...
> (III, 18)

Mars and the Trojan war are made the astonishing point of passage from the myth of Peace to that of Francus, from the glorification of Peace to the glorification of war and conquest. No wonder Laumonier considered the ensuing outline of the *Franciade* as «très artificiellement ratachée au sujet» (III, 9, n. 1).

However well, however nobly Ronsard may have paraphrased Pindar's fifth Pythian in the prelude of the *Ode de la Paix*, Peace is merely the topical pretext of the poem. Ronsard's failure to co-ordinate his avowed intention with the means of expressing it created a serious structural defect in the ode. With the beginning of the sixth epode Ronsard recognized this and attempted to restore the broken unity of the ode by returning to what should have been its true subject, «Sans estre aussi vagabonde» (v. 290). The first verses of the seventh strophe,

> O Paix heureuse,
> Tu es la garde vigoureuse
> Des peuples, & de leurs cités...
> (III, 23)

are a eulogy of Peace inspired by the prelude of Pindar's eighth Pythian: «Loving-hearted Quietude [Ἡσυχία], o child of Justice and strengthener of cities...»[112] (trans. Finley, p. 87). Like several modern translators and com-

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[111] «Allusion à l'âge d'or.» Note by Laumonier.

[112] For the textual relations between the verses of Ronsard and Pindar, see *POR*, pp. 86-87. — The apostrophe to Peace (IX, 115), in *La Paix, au Roy* (1559), anticipating the signing of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, owes nothing to Pindar's eighth Pythian.

mentators of the eighth Pythian, Ronsard has not followed Pindar in distinguishing between Εἰρήνα and Ἡσυχία. In celebrating the conclusion of peace between England and France, the substitution of the notion of domestic tranquillity, quietude, private felicity, for that of external peace would have been remote from Ronsard's purpose.

XI. Peace, Apollo, and the Muses, Divinities of Cosmic order

The concept of domestic tranquillity and private felicity, on the one hand, and on the other, the concept of peace among nations or between warring factions within one nation, though essentially different, are united by deepest affinities. When Ronsard, in *La Paix, au Roy* (1559), places before the eyes of Henri II an enchanting description of a country at peace, not least among the blessings he enumerates is the deliverance of the Muses and the arts of peace from the trammels of war:

> Adonques en repos les campaignes jaunissent,
> Toutes pleines d'espis, les fleurs s'epanouissent
> Le long d'un bas rivage, & plus haut les raisins
> Aux sommetz des coutaux nous meurissent leurs vins.
> Le peuple à l'aise dort, les citez sont tranquilles,
> Les Muses & les ars fleurissent par les villes...
> (IX, 111)

These are words that came naturally to one who almost ten years earlier, as he was taking his first steps in a renowned career, had written, «... des mon enfance j'ai tousjours estimé l'estude des bonnes lettres, l'heureuse felicité de la vie, & sans laquelle on doit desesperer ne pouvoir jamais attaindre au comble du parfait contentement» (I, 43-44). Ten years later, at the height of his powers and reputation, Ronsard was to write in his *Discours à... Chauveau* (1569):

> Contemple moy de ton temps les Musiques:[113]
> Quand elles sont & fortes & rustiques,
> D'un masle son, croy que telle Cité
> Doit longtemps vivre en sa fœlicité...
> (XV, 159)

For Ronsard, who in the *Ode de la Paix*, had described Zeus as seating Peace, the creative divinity, beside him in honor, and as thrusting aside with scorn the destroyer Mars, the close affinity among Peace, the Muses, and the arts, is one of the most meaningful and enduring postulates of his poetic life.

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[113] «R. a voulu dire: les genres, les modes de la musique.» Note by Laumonier.

He would surely have reached this conviction sooner or later, but his early and assiduous study of classical authors, and especially of Pindar, enabled him to reach it almost at once. The magnificent prelude of the first Pythian ode, with its serene exaltation of Apollo, the Muses, and the lyre as the symbols of cosmic order, harmony, and peace, capable of disarming violent Ares and reducing him to deep slumber; with its tremendous, seismic lines on the punishment of mutinous Typhon, the principle of universal chaos and disorder — the first Pythian became an early and permanent ideal possession of Ronsard's thought.

It inspired the preludes of *L'Hymne de France* (1549) and *A sa lire* (1550). The presence of analogous ideas is felt in the *Ode de la Paix*, and in many of Ronsard's poems which allude to the Gigantomachy and the Titanomachy. If Zeus treats Mars with contumely in that ode, it is because the god of war, like Typhon, embodies the principle of lawless anarchy and chaos, while the embodiment of the opposing cosmic, creative, and ordering principle is Peace,[114]

> Laquelle osta le debat
> Du Chaos, quand la premiere
> Elle assoupit le combat
> Qui aveugloit la lumiere.[115]
> Elle seule oza tenter
> D'effondrer le ventre large
> Du grand Tout, pour enfanter
> L'obscur fardeau de sa charge.
> Puis demembrant l'univers
> En quatre quartiers divers,
> Sa main divinement sainte
> Les lia de clous d'aimant...[116]
>
> (III, 5-6; cf. IX, 25, 107-108)

When, after the long interlude containing the scenario of the *Franciade*, Ronsard returns to the glorification of Peace, he praises her for having

> ... eteint tout l'ennui
> Des guerres injurieuses,
> Faisant flamber aujourd'hui
> Tes graces victorieuses...
>
> (III, 25)

What are the victorious graces of Peace if not the songs of the Muses who alone have the power to people with hymns of praise the silence of envious time and to grant an immortality to Henri II comparable to that of his father, François Ier:

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[114] See Weber, pp. 95, 482; cf. Luzius Keller, *Palingène, Ronsard, Du Bartas*, pp. 89-90.

[115] «Imité de Claudien, *De consulatu Stilichonis*, II, 6-11.» Note by Laumonier.

[116] «Expression pindarique, *Pyth.*, IV, 71.» Note by Laumonier.

Nul jamais ne s'est vanté
D'avoir consacré sa gloire,
Si la Muse n'a chanté
Les hinnes de sa memoire...
Presque le los de tes aieus
Est pressé du tens envieus,
Pour n'avoir eu l'experience
Des Muses ne de leur science:
Mais le vuide de l'univers
Est plein de la gloire eternelle
Qui fait flamber ton pere en elle
Pour avoir tant aimé les vers.
(III, 29, 34)

Several months after the publication of the *Ode de la Paix*, in *A Madame Marguerite*, Ronsard described the princess who had understood and supported his audacious Pindaric initiative, as

seule en France,
Et la colonne, & l'esperance
Des Muses...
(III, 98)

The Muses, who by choice live in peace among

les fleurs reculées
Loing à l'escart, par les valées
Au fond de deux tertres bossus,[117]
Ou parmy les forestz sauvages,
Ou par le segret des rivages,
Ou dans les antres bien moussus...
(III, 100)

who, encouraged by their divine brother, Apollo Musagetes,

En vain ne chatouillent la lyre,
Et si Apollon leur faict dire
Les Geantz r'occis de leur voix,
Encor' devant leur vieille Mere,[118]
Tant sont vergougneuses, leur Frere
Ne les fera chanter deux foys...

who welcome Athena in her role as the divinity of the arts of peace,

Si quelqu'un de Pallas devise,
El' appreuvent bien son emprise
De filler, de tixtre, & d'ourdir,
D'imposer nouveaux noms aux villes,
Et soubz les pollices civiles
Ne laisser les loix engourdir...

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[117] The two summits of Mt. Parnassus.

[118] Mnemosyne.

but who turn away from the martial aspects of Athena's nature:

Mais d'aller horrible à la guerre,
De pousser les citez par terre,
Et vierge hanter les combatz,
Coiffer d'un morrion sa teste
Et l'ombrager d'une grand creste:
Les Muses ne l'appreuvent pas.
(III, 101)

XII. The Gigantomachy: Cosmic Warfare and Civil War

The brief allusion to the Gigantomachy — «Les Geantz r'occis» — in *A Madame Marguerite*, and the slight but critically significant suggestion of it in *A sa lire* (I, 163, vv. 17-18), receive in the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital*, the fullest development they will have in Ronsard's poetry. For him the central myth of the ode to l'Hospital as performed by the Muses to the accompaniment of Apollo's lyre, is the issue of cosmic war and peace represented by the struggle of the rebellious Giants against the Olympian order.[119] As though to leave no doubt that this is his intention Ronsard, in an introductory strophe rich in mythological symbolism, tells how the Muses first sang of the contest between Athena and Poseidon for the land of Attica, a contest from which the goddess emerged victorious:

Elles ouvrant leur bouche pleine
D'une doulce Arabe moisson,
Par l'esprit d'une vive haleine
Donnerent l'ame à leur chanson:
Fredonnant sur la chanterelle
De la Harpe du Delien,
La contentieuse querelle
De Minerve & du Cronien:
Comme elle du sein de la terre
Poussa son Arbre pallissant,
Et luy son Cheval hanissant
Futur augure de la guerre.
(III, 128-129)

«Il s'agit», says Laumonier's note, «du fameux débat entre Minerve et Neptune pour le patronage de l'Attique: la déesse faisant sortir du sol le pâle olivier, symbole de la paix, le dieu un cheval fougueux, symbole de la guerre, — mythe représenté sur le fronton occidental du Parthénon.»

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[119] Ronsard, like his contemporaries, failed to distinguish sharply the Titans and the Giants from each other or from the Hekatoncheires. See Françoise Joukovsky, «La guerre des dieux et des géants chez les poètes français du XVI[e] siècle (1500-1585)», *BHR*, XXIX (1967), 55, n. 1.

The Muses turn to an account of the struggle upon whose outcome was to depend the destiny of the world itself: whether it was to be governed in its innermost laws by the forces of reason and beauty implicit in the peaceful dispensation of Zeus and the Olympians, or by the forces of anarchy and irresponsible evil and violence represented by the Titans.

By its triadic division into strophes, antistrophes, and epodes the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital* is, of course, Pindaric in form. Apart from this it contains a number of Pindaric reminiscences, the most important being perhaps, the graceful acknowledgment in the first strophe (III, 118-119), of Ronsard's debt to the poet of Thebes. More to our present purpose, however, is the renewed description, after the first Pythian (10-12), of the enthrallment of Mars, overmastered in sleep as he listens to the music of the daughters of Zeus (III, 137). But for the substance of the myth and a description of the war between the seditious monsters and the gods of Olympus, Ronsard went to the *Theogony* of Hesiod, a poet to whom Pindar himself was deeply obligated.[120]

At the time of the religious wars, more than a decade after the composition of the ode to l'Hospital, it was inevitable that the Protestant rebellion should present itself to Ronsard, learned in the *Theogony*, and instructed by the fate of Typhon in the first Pythian, under the image of a Gigantomachy. For him, a confirmed adherent of the existing order founded upon an identity of interest between Church and State, the new doctrines were utterly subversive, and those who preached them were in league against heavenly rule and against the divine rule of the king. His patriotic writings of this period express in mingled Hesiodic and Biblical language his horror of the doctrinal innovations and activities of the Lutherans and Calvinists.

In his *Discours des miseres de ce temps* of 1562, for example, Ronsard imagines a marriage between Zeus and «Dame Presomption» which results in the birth of a hideous daughter, Opinion, «peste du genre humain»:

> Elle se vint loger par estranges moyens
> Dedans le cabinet des Theologiens,
> De ces nouveaux Rabins, & brouilla leurs courages
> Par la diversité de cent nouveaux passages,
> Afin de les punir d'estre trop curieux
> Et d'avoir eschellé comme Geants les cieux.
> (XI, 27)

The influence of Opinion upon the mind of Luther is responsible for all the evils that have befallen the great institutions of Europe:

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[120] See *RGE*, Chap. XVII, «Ronsard and Hesiod: *Theogony*», esp. pp. 312-318. Part of the chapter had appeared originally as «Ronsard débutant et la 'Théogonie' d'Hésiode», in *RHLF*, LX (1960), 153-164. — Cf. F. Joukovsky, *art. cit.*, pp. 71-72, 76-77.

Lors Luther, agité des fureurs du Serpent,
Son venin & sa rage en Saxonne respend...
De là toute heresie au monde prist naissance,
De là vient que l'Eglise a perdu sa puissance,
De là vient que les Roys ont le Sceptre esbranlé,
De là vient que le foyble est du fort violé,
De là sont procedés ces Geants qui eschellent
Le Ciel, & au combat les Dieux mesmes appellent...
(XI, 81; cf. p. 104)

XIII. The Blessed Isles

The religious wars were for France the inexorable irruption within her boundaries of an upheaval that had been in the making for several centuries and had engulfed much of Europe since the beginning of the sixteenth. The massacre of the Protestants at Vassy in 1562, which ushered in the first of the French religious wars, was but the last of a series of sanguinary incidents — the slaughter of the Vaudois, the Conspiracy of Amboise, the incessant wars between François I^er^, Henri II, and Charles V, above all, the disastrous defeat of the French at Saint-Quentin — which aroused in Ronsard a longing for that unattainable tranquillity of the spirit enjoyed by the heroes of ancient Greece, translated by the will of the gods to immortal life in the Elysian plain or the Islands of the Blest.

In Homer Ronsard may have read how Menelaus had been conveyed by the immortals to a land «where life is easiest for men. No snow is there, nor heavy storm, nor ever rain, but ever does Ocean send up blasts of the shrill-blowing West Wind that they may give cooling to men...» (*Odyssey*, IV, 565-568). Hesiod had written how Zeus had granted to some of the righteous heroes of the Trojan war «an abode apart from men, and made them dwell at the ends of the earth. And they live untouched by sorrow in the islands of the blessed along the shore of deep swirling Ocean, happy heroes for whom the grain-giving earth bears honey-sweet fruit flourishing thrice a year...» (*Works and Days*, 167-173). This account of a life from which the usual cares of existence have been lifted Ronsard read once more in an amplified and incomparably enchanting version in the second Olympian ode of Pindar, which was among those he had most diligently studied: «... the good, having the sun shining for evermore, for equal days and equal nights, receive the boon of a life of lightened toil, not vexing the soil with the strength of their hands, no, nor the water of the sea, to gain a scanty livelihood; but, in the presence of the honoured gods, all who were wont to rejoice in keeping their oaths, share a life that knoweth no tears, while the others endure labour that none can look upon. But, whosoever, while dwelling in either world, have thrice been courageous in keeping their souls pure form all deeds of

wrong, pass by the highway of Zeus unto the tower of Cronus, where the ocean-breezes blow around the Islands of the Blest, and flowers of gold are blazing, some on the shore from radiant trees, while others the water fostereth: and with chaplets thereof they entwine their hands, and with crowns, according to the righteous councils of Rhadamanthys...» (61-75).

As Pindar had amplified the Homeric and Hesiodic versions of this legend of the Blessed Isles, so Horace in the sixteenth Epode had enlarged upon the tradition as it had come down to him. He added a thought addressed to the cultivated citizens of Rome, troubled by the outbreak of civil war, that it would be wise to heed the example of the Phocaeans who, besieged by the Persians in 534 B.C., had abandoned their city and taken to their ships in search of another more fortunate land.

In *Les Isles fortunées à Marc Antoine de Muret* Ronsard in turn expanded the already greatly amplified legend. When Muret in 1553 was about to leave France for permanent residence in Italy, Ronsard inscribed to him this ode of farewell in which the poetic élite of France are represented as accompanying Muret on an imaginary voyage to the Islands of the Blest. There the vexations of life in contemporary Europe, torn by war, would be forgotten in a never-ending round of liberal humanistic pursuits and other exquisite pleasures.

Paul Laumonier (V, 175, n. 2), and later Elizabeth Armstrong,[121] saw at once that Ronsard had found the idea for this poem in Horace's Epode XVI. The extent of Ronsard's obligation to Horace can indeed hardly be exaggerated — it is manifest throughout most of *Les Isles fortunées* in spite of the copious amplifications by the poet of Vendôme. What does not emerge clearly from Laumonier's commentary is that the debt to Homer and Hesiod is negligible, but that a number of verses, including some of the most beautiful in Pindar's second Olympian ode, had found their way into *Les Isles fortunées*. They are discernible through Ronsard's abundant elaborations, which sometimes match in luxuriance those of Horace's sixteenth Epode.

In these Blessed Islands, Ronsard assures Muret,

> Par les ruisseaus toujours le lait ondoïe,
> Et sur les bors toujours l'herbe verdoïe,
> Sans qu'on la fauche, & toujours diaprés
> De mile fleurs se painturent les prés...
> (V, 183)

The reference to streams running with milk, one of Ronsard's innumerable amplifications, is Biblical of course, and is absent from both Epode XVI and Olympian II, but the allusion to river banks and painted meadows richly

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[121] *Ronsard and the Age of Gold*, p. 14.

adorned with a thousand flowers seems to reflect vv. 72-73 of Pindar's ode: «flowers of gold are blazing, some on the shore from radiant trees.»

The image soon occurs once more in Ronsard's poem, this time, as in the second Olympian, in association with the weaving of flowers into chaplets:

> Là des Dragons les races ecaillées
> Dormans aus bors des rives emaillées,
> Ne font horreur à cellui qui seulet
> Va par les prés s'ourdir un chapelet...
> (V, 184; cf. p. 187, v. 194)

On the word *chapelet* Laumonier's note says: «Une coiffure, et par suite une couronne.» In the second Olympian, in immediate sequel to the description of the blazing flowers of gold, we read that those who dwell in the Blessed Isles, «with chaplets thereof... entwine their hands, and with crowns» (74).

The life of the righteous heroes in the Islands of the Blest is not only deathless, it is «a life that knoweth no tears» (65-66). Ronsard has expanded Pindar's three words, ἄδακρυν νέμονται αἰῶνα, into four verses:

> Là, les enfans n'enterrent point leurs peres,
> Et là les sœurs ne lamentent leurs freres:
> Et l'épousé ne s'adolore pas
> De voir mourir sa femme entre ses bras...
> (V, 184-185)

In none of these instances is there any genuine trace of Pindar's second Olympian in Horace's Epode.

As Laumonier stated at the beginning of his commentary on *Les Isles fortunées*, Horace's poem had been inspired by passages, transcribed above, in Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar. Ronsard, as he adapted the text of the Roman lyrist, was gathering, perhaps unawares sometimes, portions of the Hellenic legacy by which he set such great store. In the case of *Les Isles fortunées*, however, his personal studies enabled him to contribute to the preservation of certain aspects of that legacy which Horace had overlooked and which led him to a deeper vision of Pindar's Islands of the Blest.

XIV. «... tout paisible & coy, Tu vivras dans les bois pour la Muse & pour toy»

Ronsard may be forgiven if in the seventh strophe of the *Ode de la Paix* he took Ἡσυχία as a true equivalent of Εἰρήνα. For one who may not have studied with utmost attention Pindar's prelude to the eighth Pythian, which apostrophizes Hesychia as the divinity who holds «the final keys of councils and of wars», the distinction between Hesychia and Eirena may not have

been apparent. Besides, in the *Ode de la Paix*, to have made that distinction would, as we know, have carried Ronsard away from his purpose.

Nevertheless, throughout much of his life he shared Pindar's longing for «a peaceful day, the Sun's own child». In a passage of the *Remonstrance* which Laumonier describes as «Cet hymne au Soleil» (XI, 67, n. 1), similar imagery occurs spontaneously, and almost certainly without benefit of Pindar's text, when Ronsard refers to the Sun as «le pere du jour» (v. 78). Though as «poète du Roi» he indifferently wrote poetry in favor of war or peace to satisfy those who had power to command his services, there can be no doubt that instinctively, like Pindar, he equated the arts of Apollo and the Muses with the arts of peace.

Almost everything in his nature and in the circumstances of his life fostered the same aspiration for tranquillity, for Hesychia, though the word itself is not found in his poetry. To assure the material needs that might enable him to pursue a poetic career he was totally dependent on the Court, which he nevertheless hated with an enduring hostility. In 1550 he wrote:

> L'un suit la court, & les grans dieus ensemble,
> Si que son chef au ciel semble toucher,
> L'autre les fuit, & est mort ce lui semble
> Si voit le Roi de son toict approcher.
> (II, 2)

Ronsard surely belonged to the second of these two categories, for in 1583, upon hearing that the king and Court were coming to Tours, he fled to Paris, «car je hay la court comme la mort» (XVIII, 500). Between these two dates, which are almost coterminous with the limits of his life as a poet, more than a score of passages are devoted to this theme.[122]

Infinitely more numerous are those which speak of his love of nature, of solitude, of silent converse with the divinities of poetry in the wooded areas near Couture and Croixval or in the garden of Saint-Cosme.[123] Far from excluding each other, the two themes frequently occurred together as antithetical foils in his verses, as they did in his thoughts and feelings, each emerging strengthened from the encounter.

He solicits the aid of Charles Cardinal de Lorraine in 1556 to remove «l'obscur brouillas qui mes Muses oppresse»,

> Car les champs & les boys, & les lieux solitaires,
> Et les prez, où le Loir parmy les herbes court,
> Me plaisent beaucoup plus que le bruit de la court...
> (VIII, 348)

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[122] See, for example, II, 201-202; VI, 8-9; IX, 174-175, 190; X, 13-14; XII, 47, 201-202; XIII, 180 and variant of v. 77; XVII, 264, son. XXII.

[123] On Ronsard's love of his «terroir», see Paul Laumonier's *Ronsard et sa province* and Henri Chamard's charming pages in *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 67-68, 328-335; III, 393-396.

and Laumonier is careful to note: «Aveu précieux à retenir.»

«Nous savons», Laumonier adds in the Introduction to vol. IX of his critical edition (pp. vi-vii), «par une élégie adressée à 'son Mécène', le cardinal Odet de Coligny, vers l'automne de 1557, qu'il déserta la Cour cette année-là par dépit et par dégoût de ses vaines sollicitations auprès des puissants; il y condamne en effet avec éloquence la vie des courtisans,

> Miserables valets, vendant leur liberté
> Pour un petit d'honneur servement acheté,

et lui oppose la vie simple et calme des champs, où l'on peut jouir sans remords de la nature,

> Et composer des vers pres d'une eau qui murmure.»
> (X, 14)

To Madame Marguerite, the king's sister, he writes two years later:

> J'estois fasché de tant suivre les Rois,
> Et pour la Court[124] je me perdois es bois
> Seul à part moy sauvage & solitaire...

and he thus addresses the song of which these verses are the prelude:

> Et toi chanson si rudement sonnée,
> Demeure ici où je t'ai façonnée
> Dedans ce bois, au pied de ce rocher:
> Il ne te fault de la Court approcher,
> A tous les coups tu rougirois de honte,
> Et de ta voix on feroit peu de compte:
> Demeure ici hostesse de ces bois,
> Tu n'has que faire à la Court des grands Rois...
> (IX, 174, 190)

Every student of Ronsard knows the verses of the *Hymne de l'Automne* which describe the close and precocious relationship between his dislike of the Court and the deep attraction that nature held for him as the setting in which, like Hesiod, he was sure to find the inspiring Muses:

> Je n'avois pas quinze ans que les mons & les boys,
> Et les eaux me plaisoient plus que la court des Roys...
> A fin de voir au soir les Nymphes & les Fées
> Danser desoubs la Lune en cotte par les prées...
> J'allois apres la danse & craintif je pressois
> Mes pas dedans le trac des Nymphes, & pensois,

[124] «Au lieu d'être à la Cour.» Note by Laumonier.

Que pour mettre mon pied en leur trace poudreuse
J'aurois incontinent l'ame plus genereuse,
Ainsi que l'Ascrean qui gravement sonna,
Quand l'une des neuf Sœurs du laurier luy donna.
Or je ne fu trompé de ma douce entreprise,
Car la gentille Euterpe ayant ma dextre prise,
Pour oster le mortel par neuf fois me lava,
De l'eau d'une fontaine où peu de monde va...
(XII, 47-49; cf. X, 304)

Euterpe predicts that he will have to face the difficulties that most poets have to endure, and urges him to turn away his thoughts from the vain acquisition of treasure. The essence of her message is in the last two verses she utters, in which Ronsard, not for the first time nor for the last, understands that he will find himself only through the creative tranquillity of poetry:

... tout paisible & coy,
Tu vivras dans les boys pour la Muse & pour toy.

It is not by chance that these lines are followed at once by those that relate the beginning of the serious humanistic studies that nourished so much of his writing:

Ainsi disoit la Nymphe, & de là je vins estre
Disciple de d'Aurat, qui long temps fut mon maistre,
M'aprist la Poësie...
(XII, 50)

In the *Responce aux injures*, replying to the Huguenots who had accused him of leading a lascivious existence, he describes a typical day spent in assiduous study broken by an interval of quiet relaxation in the peaceful countryside:

Car si l'apresdinée est plaisante & sereine,
Je m'en vais promener tantost parmy la plaine,
Tantost en un village, & tantost en un boys,
Et tantost par les lieux solitaires & coys,
J'aime fort les jardins qui sentent le sauvage,
J'ayme le flot de l'eau qui gazoille au rivage.
(XI, 144)

«Il prenoit aussi singulier plaisir à jardiner», Binet informs us, «et sur tous lieux en sa maison de S. Cosme... Il sçavoit beaucoup de beaux secrets pour le jardinage, fust pour semer, planter, ou pour enter et greffer en toutes sortes...» (*Vie*, p. 45).

Ronsard was no doubt able to indulge his taste for gardening to his heart's content both at Croixval and at Saint-Cosme. His acquisition of that priory followed some months of participation — one can imagine with what eagerness — in the festivities of the Court at Fontainebleau in 1564 which gave rise to the *Elegies, Mascarades et Bergerie* (1565). At Saint-Cosme,

Laumonier tells us, «Avec son secrétaire Amadis Jamyn, il jouissait... d'un repos bien gagné, se divertissant à cultiver ce domaine, qui s'étendait de la Loire jusqu'au château du Plessis. Il avait donc 'pendu sa lyre au croc' et se livrait avec joie aux soins du jardinage...» (XV, p. v). But we may be sure that his lyre was not silent for long. With certain exceptions that were inescapable for the «poète du Roi», its melodies were in a quite different register from those demanded by Court poetry. One is transported into a new and flowering and harmonious world when one compares most of the productions of this period, published in 1569 in the *Sixiesme* and *Septiesme Livre[s] des Poëmes*, with many of the compositions written for Court consumption. The two books of *Poëmes* contained *Le Soucy du jardin*, *Le Pin*, *Le Rossignol*, the elegy *A Monsieur de Belot* which became *La Lyre* in 1584, the wonderfully poignant *A Cassandre*, one of the finest of his poems for her, *La Salade, à Amadis Jamyn*, and others too numerous to mention. Composed during, and in spite of, «une fièvre quarte, qui le mina... de 1567 au milieu de 1569» (XV, p. v), they are the products of his poetic liberation from the brilliant but sterilizing constraints of Court life.

Amadis Jamyn reveals in the liminary sonnet he wrote for the *Poëmes* how much the serenity of the garden of Saint-Cosme must have meant to Ronsard after the golden futilities of the Court:

Fait nouveau mesnager, mon Ronsard, ton plaisir
N'estoit que rebastir, & regler ton mesnage
Planter, semer, enter, aymer le jardinage,
Et la vie rustique avant toutes choisir:

Quand Phœbus despité de voir son Luc moisir
Qu'à toy seul il promist en immortel partage,
Comme à l'honneur de France, un soleil de notre aage,
De longue fiebvre quarte a voulu te saisir.

Or' toy, pour enchanter ce froid & chault martyre,
As repris en tes mains la tortueuse Lyre,
Que tu avois penduë au croq sans mouvement,

En la poussant, ton ame, en telz accords saisie,
En trois mois nous versa ces flots de Poësie,
Doux fruit (qui le croira!) d'un si aigre tourment.
(XV, 14)

This sonnet may have been Jamyn's way of thanking Ronsard for having dedicated to him *La Salade*, which shows both poets exploring the countryside about Croixval in search of

... la boursette toffuë,
La pasquerette à la fueille menuë,
La pimprenelle heureuse pour le sang,
Et pour la ratte, & pour le mal de flanc...

La responsette à la racine douce,
Et le bouton de nouveaux groiseliers...
(XV, 77)

for the simple meal which they will prepare together when they have returned from their search:

Là recoursant jusqu'au coude nos bras,
Nous laverons nos herbes à main pleine
Au cours sacré de ma belle fonteine,
La blanchirons de sel en meinte part,
L'arrouserons de vinaigre rosart,
L'engresserons de l'huille de Provence:
L'huille qui vient aux oliviers de France
Rompt l'estomac, & ne vaut du tout rien.
(XV, 77-78)

There are few poems in which Ronsard expresses with such complete and reiterated conviction the knowledge that in the serenity of this rural life, far from the hypocrisies of the Court, and racked though he is by «Cette execrable horrible fiebvre quarte», he had found the happiness that had so long eluded him:

Voilà, Jamyn, voilà mon souv'rain bien...
Tu me diras que la fiebvre m'abuze,
Que je suis fol, ma salade & ma Muse:
Tu diras vray: je le veux estre aussy,
Telle fureur me guarist mon soucy.
Tu me diras que la vie est meilleure
Des importuns, qui vivent à toute heure
Aupres des Grandz en credit, & bonheur,
Enorgueilliz de pompes & d'honneur:
Je le sçay bien, mais je ne le veuz faire,
Car telle vie à la mienne est contraire.
Il faut mentir, flater, & courtizer,
Rire sans ris, sa face deguiser
Au front d'autruy, & je ne le veux faire,
Car telle vie à la mienne est contraire.
Je suis pour suivre à la trace une Court,
Trop maladif, trop paresseux, & sourd,[125]
Et trop creintif: au reste je demande

[125] «A ceste excellente imagination, qu'il avoit de sa naissance, il adjoustoit encore ceste autre commodité, que son accident luy apportoit, qui estoit l'amour de la solitude. Car comme il voyoit que sa surdité le rendoit moins agreable pour la conversation des hommes, il prenoit suject de là de se retirer des compagnies, & de fuir le bruit & le tumulte, encore que parmy les compagnies, & parmy le peuple mesme il portast aucunement sa solitude avecques luy. Ce qui sans mentir me semble luy avoir esté une grande faveur du Ciel pour l'exercice de sa profession: car il n'y a point d'objects qui destournent tant l'esprit de l'imagination & de la contemplation, que ceux de l'ouye, ny qui soyent plus contraires aux inventions & aux conceptions poëtiques. C'est pourquoy les anciens bastissoient ordinairement les temples des Muses le plus loing qu'ils pouvoient des villes...» Du Perron, *Oraison funebre*, pp. 43-44.

Un doux repos, & ne veux plus qu'on pende
Comme un pongnard, les soucis sur mon front.
(XV, 78-79; cf. XVII, 371)

These lines grew out of an almost daily experience of courtly life that had lasted for a score of years and longer. «Il faut mentir, flater, & courtizer, Rire sans ris...» — it is evident that the voice we hear is that of Ronsard, and its accent of sincerity carries to those who listen the conviction with which his words were felt and uttered. In 1569 Ronsard may not have remembered what Pindar had said to Hieron in the second Pythian ode, but situations comparable to those which he encountered had drawn similar thoughts from the poet who preceded him by two millennia: «A deceitful citizen can never utter a word of force among noble men, yet he fawneth on all and thus weaveth on every side his tangled path. I cannot share his boldness... But, under every mode of government, a man of straightforward speech cometh to the front, whether at the tyrant's court, or where the boisterous host, or where the wise, have care of the State» (81-83, 86-88).

Four years after *La Salade* Ronsard composed the moving threnody on the destruction of the forest of Gastine:

Adieu vieille forest, le jouët de Zephyre,
Où premier j'accorday les langues de ma lyre,
Où premier j'entendi les fleches resonner
D'Apollon, qui me vint tout le cœur estonner:
Où premier admirant la belle Calliope,
Je devins amoureux de sa neuvaine trope,
Quand sa main sur le front cent roses me jetta,
Et de son propre laict Euterpe m'allaita.
Adieu vieille forest, adieu testes sacrées...
(XVIII, 145)

In order to live and compose poetry in the solitude of field or forest or garden, «tout paisible & coy... pour la Muse & pour [soy]», Ronsard gladly abandoned as often as he could the tumult of the Court and the cities. To possess himself in total emancipation of the spirit[126] the greatest erotic poet of the French Renaissance liberated himself from the importunities of Eros and gave himself over to the society of the great classical authors and to the study of flowers in gratitude for their beauty and the silence of their companionship:

Six ans estoient coulez, & le septiesme annee
Estoit presques entiere en ses pas retournee,

[126] «Et voulez vous que je vous die ce qui m'a le plus ennuyé durant ces troubles [the religious wars], c'est que je n'ay peu jouyr de la franchise de mon esprit, ny librement estudier comme au paravant» (XII, 15). — Ronsard need hardly have changed this sentiment had he been referring to the Court.

Quand loin d'affection, de desir & d'amour,
En pure liberté je passois tout le jour,
Et franc de tout soucy qui les ames devore,
Je dormois dés le soir jusqu'au point de l'aurore.
Car seul maistre de moy j'allois plein de loisir,
Où le pied me portoit, conduit de mon desir,
Ayant tousjours és mains pour me servir de guide
Aristote ou Platon, ou le docte Euripide
Mes bons hostes muets, qui ne faschent jamais:
Ainsi que je les prens, ainsi je les remais.
O douce compagnie & utile & honneste!
Un autre en caquetant m'estourdiroit la teste.
Puis du livre ennuyé, je regardois les fleurs,
Feuilles tiges rameaux especes & couleurs,
Et l'entrecoupement de leurs formes diverses,
Peintes de cent façons, jaunes rouges & perses,
Ne me pouvant saouler, ainsi qu'en un tableau,
D'admirer la Nature, & ce qu'elle a de beau:
Et de dire en parlant aux fleurettes escloses,
«Celuy est presque Dieu qui cognoist toutes choses,
Esloigné du vulgaire, & loin des courtizans,
De fraude & de malice impudens artizans.
(XVIII, 33-34)

As the present century was beginning Pierre Perdrizet wrote, «L'humaniste est naturellement pacifique; ses travaux ont besoin de tranquillité».[127] Perdrizet was writing of a great poet who was also a humanist. Many years later Robert Aulotte wrote of a great humanist who was also a poet. Between Ronsard and Jacques Amyot he found a number of revealing similarities, in particular, «l'impatience de la vie de cour et le goût de la retraite studieuse».[128]

XV. «Prens ce Livre pour gage, & luy fais, je te prie, Ouvrir en ma faveur ta belle Librairie...»

In 1580 or 1581 Ronsard dedicated *Les Amours diverses* to Nicolas de Neufville, Seigneur de Villeroy, Secretaire d'Estat de sa Majesté. Ronsard, in a valedictory mood, now that he feels the end coming near, casts up the positive and negative account of his life and times — the pleasures and the pains, the torments of civil war and of illusory peace, the survival of virtue even at Court, the national hearth of vice and hypocrisy:

Ja du prochain hyver je prevoy la tempeste,
Ja cinquante & six ans ont neigé sur ma teste,

[127] *Ronsard et la Réforme*, p. 97.
[128] *Amyot et Plutarque*, p. 322.

Il est temps de laisser les vers & les amours,
Et de prendre congé du plus beau de mes jours.
J'ay vescu (Villeroy) si bien que nulle envie
En partant je ne porte aux plaisirs de la vie,
Je les ay tous goutez, & me les suis permis
Autant que la raison me les rendoit amis,
Sur l'eschaffaut mondain joüant mon personnage
D'un habit convenable au temps & à mon âge.
J'ay veu lever le jour, j'ay veu coucher le soir,
J'ay veu greller, tonner, esclairer & pluvoir,
J'ay veu peuples & Rois, & depuis vingt annees
J'ay veu presque la France au bout de ses journees,
J'ay veu guerres, debats, tantost tréves & paix,
Tantost accords promis, redefais & refais,
Puis defais & refais...
Je m'en vais soul du monde ainsi qu'un convié
S'en va soul du banquet de quelque marié...

If he is grateful for anything it is to have been a contemporary of Villeroy:

... de t'avoir veu naistre, ame noble & divine,
Qui d'un cœur genereux loges en ta poitrine
Les errantes vertus, que tu veux soulager
En cet âge où chacun refuse à les loger:
En ceste saison dis-je en vices monstrueuse,
Où la mer des malheurs d'une onde impetueuse
Sur nous s'est débordé, où vivans avons veu
Le mal que nos ayeux n'eussent pensé ny creu.

What Ronsard most admires in Villeroy is the fact that he has retained his integrity in a period so dissolute and at so corrupt a Court:

Toutefois en cet âge, en ce siecle de boüe,
Où de toutes vertus la Fortune se joüe,
Sa divine clemence ayant de nous soucy,
T'a fait ô Villeroy, naistre en ce monde icy
Entre les vanitez, la paresse & le vice,
Et les seditions qui n'ont soin de justice,
Entre les nouveautez, entre les courtizans
De fraude & de mensonge impudens artizans,
Entre le cry du peuple & ses plaintes funebres,
Afin que ta splendeur esclairast aux tenebres,
Et ta vertu parust par ce siecle eshonté,
Comme un Soleil sans nue au plus clair de l'Esté.
(XVIII, 36-40)

He has approached, so he tells his friend, «aux faubourgs de vieillesse», and finds it hopeless to imagine that he could ever repay the innumerable kindnesses he has received at Villeroy's hands (vv. 133-148). And yet, in return for the dedication of his *Amours diverses*, Ronsard seeks still another favor from his benefactor. The poet and the humanist in him fuse their separate gifts to create an imagery, at once *livresque* and floral, delightful to both scholars and poets:

161 Prens ce Livre pour gage, & luy fais, je te prie,
Ouvrir en ma faveur ta belle Librairie,
Où logent sans parler tant d'hostes estrangers:
Car il sent aussi bon que font tes orangers.
(XVIII, 43)

Upon the confines of old age, as in the days of his early manhood, Ronsard, incurably wishing for the silence and peace of the library and for the bookish companions who have much to say but do not raise their voices, offers, in exchange for this boon, to mingle the perfume of his verses with the fragrance of Villeroy's orange-groves. There is surely nothing Pindaric or even specifically Hellenic in these lines, but who are these enigmatical «hostes estrangers» if not the poets of Hellas and of Latium whom Ronsard found it so hard to leave, in life as in the expectation of death?

CHAPTER XXI

ETHICS IN PINDAR AND RONSARD: TERRESTRIAL BONDS, CELESTIAL AFFINITIES (I)

> One race there is of men and one of gods, but from one mother [Earth] draw we both our breath
>
> Ils ont les pieds à terre & l'esprit dans les Cieux

I. Gods, Heroes, and Men: Their Ancient Ethical Kinship

Not many critics, perhaps none, would defend the position that Pindar was a methodical votary of religion or a systematic moralist. «Daher hat er auch einen eigenen Glauben, und dieser ist uns noch wichtiger, als was wir durch ihn über die Götter, ihre Kulte und ihre Mythen erfahren. Sein Glaube, sage ich, denn dahinter steht kein System, kein bindendes credo...»[1] But there is a broad consensus of opinion that the most ancient ethical and religious concepts of Greece[2] are everywhere present in his odes. «Pindar als festländischer Dichter hat viele Elemente eines altertümlichen Glaubens bewahrt, welche in den hauptsächlich kleinasiatischen Gattungen der Lyrik und des Epos nur noch in Spuren begegnen.»[3] To some students of his work, and not the least judicious among them, these ethical and religious concepts constitute some of the most essential elements of his poetry. Of Hesiod, who profoundly influenced Pindar, Maurice Croiset said, «... morale d'un côté, religion de l'autre, deux aspects de la sagesse éternelle, voilà en quel sens la

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[1] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Der Glaube der Hellenen*, II, 126.

[2] See Gildersleeve, pp. xxxi-xxxii, 129.

[3] Fritz Wehrli, ΛΑΘΕ ΒΙΩΣΑΣ: *Studien zur ältesten Ethik bei den Griechen* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1931), p. 67. — See also A.W. Mair, «Sin (Greek)», (below, n. 55); Leopold Schmidt, *Die Ethik der alten Griechen* (Berlin, 1882), I, 11-14 (facsimile reprint, Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt, 1964); Max Wundt, *Geschichte der griechischen Ethik* (Leipzig, 1908), I, 117-118).

Théogonie se rattache aux *Travaux*».[4] In Pindar's triumphal songs these aspects virtually coalesce.[5]

His odes are populated by a concourse of gods and men and the heroes or demigods who mediate between them. «Par le choix même de ses personnages héroïques», Jacqueline Duchemin writes (p. 164), «et par le caractère qu'il leur prête, Pindare affirme nettement la préoccupation morale autour de laquelle s'organise sa pensée religieuse.[6] Il est significatif de noter qu'il a ses héros ou ses races de prédilection, dont les exploits et les vertus fournissent matière aux plus glorieux rapprochements. Alors qu'il insiste moins sur ceux dont la merveilleuse aventure apparaît surtout comme un effet gratuit de la faveur divine, il ne se lasse pas de revenir sur ceux qui ont conquis de haute lutte leur récompense. A vrai dire, ce dernier caractère n'est peut-être jamais totalement absent: rien n'est, dans la vie des héros qu'il chante, privilège non mérité.»

In this judgment J. Duchemin is in general agreement with Alfred Croiset (p. 243): «Ce qui est surtout remarquable dans la philosophie morale de Pindare, c'est, outre la grande place qu'elle occupe dans ses poèmes, un caractère d'élévation religieuse et idéale qui paraît avoir été le privilège le plus caractéristique de son génie... cette morale vient des dieux, ou, ce qui revient au même, de l'antique tradition, laquelle se rattache aux mythes et aux dieux.» For Croiset (p. 232) the first commandment of the Pindaric Decalogue is: «Honor the gods.»

The poet is the bearer of a divine message at once religious and moral, a message whose essential burden is generally conveyed by the myth. The choice of the myth is often determined by the analogy between the superhuman virtues of the mythical hero or demigod and the qualities revealed by the victor in the Games to whom the particular ode is addressed. «Le mythe est alors employé de façon symbolique, pour soutenir et figurer l'enseignement moral» (Duchemin, pp. 338-340).

The profound ethical, philosophic, and religious implications of these affinities among gods, heroes, and men, as Pindar intuitively sensed them, were brought out by Finley in a revealing passage[7] which compares most of Pindar's poems to metaphors of three terms: the hero, a demigod, mediating between the human and the divine, confers on man's evanescent «involvement in time» a momentary experience of a world beyond time, transcending self, a «second world of pure being», akin to that of the gods.

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[4] *Histoire de la littérature grecque*, I, p. 540 of the first (1887) edition.

[5] Cf. E. Buchholz, *Die sittliche Weltanschauung des Pindaros und Aeschylos* (Leipzig, 1869), p. 84.

[6] Cf. Farnell, II, 459.

[7] *Pindar and Aeschylus*, pp. 40-41.

II. Ajax, Cadmus

In sixteenth-century France, in the absence of the Games, there were neither demigods, nor victorious athletes, nor communities to sense the deep ties that united them, through their heroes, to the gods. The bond with divinity, an alien divinity at best, though not irreparably destroyed, survived in diminished status. Ronsard no doubt saw certain aspects of reality through these mythic means, but it was often a merely ornamental and *livresque* perception, hardly the living reality which constituted the coherent fabric of Pindar's thought and feeling.

Livresque is a term of disparagement only if one underestimates the power of the word to influence a sensitive reader. Merely to grasp in what profundity the persons of the Muses, for example, are realized in the overtures to the *Theogony* and the first Pythian ode, is to comprehend the greatness of the task that confronted Ronsard or any poet in an endeavor to reanimate the figures of a mythology severed by the process of history from their nutritive soil. The deep sense of kinship that bound Ronsard, as it did Hesiod and Pindar, to the Muses, transformed that task into an opportunity welcomed with delight and gratitude.

In the poetry of Ronsard the Muses are universally present. With Apollo Musagetes, they are the Word of Zeus, divinities who moved the profoundest impulses of poets and reigned sovereignly over their every expression of heart and mind. In the nature of things such a relationship could not exist with the semidivine heroes. Their appearance in the odes, whether in Pindar's or Ronsard's, was necessarily contingent on the circumstances that dictated the substance of each poem. In the case of Ronsard that substance was determined by the imperatives of life at the Court of France, and by the poet's associations with colleagues, patrons, and members of the nobility who might advance his interests. The insertion of the heores of Greek mythology into odes composed under these constraints was often an impossibility, and when undertaken, risked seeming arbitrary and artificial. It is not surprising, therefore, that in Ronsard's fifteen Pindaric odes there are but four rapid references to heroes of antiquity — Achilles, Cadmus, Adrastus, and Heracles — occupying all told fewer than a dozen verses. It is almost exclusively in the poetry that followed the publication of his Pindaric odes that we must look for the presence of the heroes who, in the songs of the Theban poet, symbolized man's ethical striving and ultimately his innate motion toward a transcendent ideal.[8]

[8] The myth of Bellerophon has an important place in Ronsard's Pindaric ode *Au seigneur de Carnavalet*, but he is, like Tantalus and other offenders, an example of the arrogance

«The death of [Telamonian] Ajax», Bowra writes (p. 70), «distressed [Pindar] deeply as a wrong done to a surpassing hero. Because Odysseus, in the decision on the arms of Achilles, was largely responsible for this, Pindar condemns him and not only says that because of Homer's art his fame is more than he deserves (*N.* 7. 20 ff.), but, after telling how Odysseus dishonestly fixes the award with the result that Ajax kills himself, launches into a fierce attack on the motives and methods of Odysseus [:]» «Envy it was that devoured the son of Telamon when his flesh closed upon his sword. Verily, in him, one without gift of speech, though bold of heart, is overwhelmed in oblivion amid grievous strife, while the greatest prize hath been held forth to cunning falsehood. For the Danai, by their secret votes, unfairly favoured Odysseus; and Aias, reft of the golden armour, wrestled with death... Thus, even in days of old, there was malignant misrepresentation, walking in the ways of crafty language, imagining deceit, mischief-making calumny. She doeth violence to the illustrious, and for the obscure raiseth on high a glory that is rottenness» (Nem. VIII, 23-34).

The suicide of Ajax must have made a deep impression on Ronsard, for over a period of some twenty years he referred to it again and again in tones that recall Pindar's emotion, though he does not seem to have been inspired by Pindar's text. In the *Epistre... à tresillustre prince Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine* (1556), after thanking the prelate for his «honneste largesse» in appointing Jean Dorat to a chair at the Collège Royal, Ronsard adds:

> Tel acte en bon conseil passa celuy des Grez,
> Qui davant Ilion ordonnerent, apres
> Qu'Achille fut tué par segrette malice,
> (Fraudant le grand Ajax) ses armes à Ulysse,
> Couhard & malhabille à supporter le faix
> D'un tel bouclair d'acier si fort & si espaix.[9]
> Ainsy ayant les Grecz permission d'élire
> Le meilleur de l'armée, ilz choisirent le pire,
> Et par faute d'avoir le jugement entier,
> Firent un rien-ne-vaut d'un vaillant l'heritier.
> (VIII, 337-338)

In the *Second livre des Meslanges* (1559), he returned to the theme with a

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that leads men to their doom. Prometheus, who is mentioned briefly in the *Ode de la Paix* (III, 26) and frequently throughout Ronsard's poetry, is an intermediate figure between the benefactors of mankind like Heracles and those who committed offenses against the gods, for it was his benefaction to man that earned him the hostility of Zeus. See *RGE*, pp. 332-333, and my article on «Ronsard's Ethical Thought», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), 90.

[9] Ronsard was here following an ancient tradition. Cf. L.R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921), p. 308: «[In] the Attic drama... the figure of Aias remains noble and even sublime, while that of his rival Odysseus is almost uniformly debased.»

paraphrase of two sepulchral epigrams by Asclepiades and Antipater of Sidon (*Greek Anthology*, VII, 145 and 146):[10]

> Quelle est cette Déesse, à dent toute couchée[11]
> Sur le tombeau d'Ajax? C'est la pauvre Vertu.
> Quelle main si hardie a sa tresse arrachée,
> Et de grands coups de poing son estomach batu?
> Soymesmes se l'est faict, de son ongle pointu,
> Marrie contre Ulysse, apres que lachement
> (L'ost des Grecs estant juge) un tort bien debatu
> Veinquit la verité par un faux jugement.
>
> (X, 126; cf. X, 128; XVIII, 158)

Three years later the death of Ajax by his own hand became the image of France plunged into the suicidal religious wars:

> Car tout ainsi qu'on voit une dure coignée
> Moins reboucher son fer, plus est embesoignée
> A couper, à trancher, & à fendre du bois,
> Ainsi par le travail s'endurcist le François:
> Lequel n'ayant trouvé qui par armes le domte
> De son propre cousteau soymesmes se surmonte,[12]
> Ainsi le fier Ajax fut de soy le veinqueur,
> De son propre cousteau se transperceant le cueur.
>
> (XI, 23)

Of Ronsard's three references to Cadmus only one need detain us. The founder of Thebes is mentioned in the *Ode de la Paix* as a victim of the vicissitudes of fortune that dominate the lives of great and small alike:

> Nul n'est exent de la fortune,
> Car sans esgard elle importune
> Et peuples, & rois & seigneurs:
> Cadme[13] sentit bien sa secousse
> Et de quel tonnerre elle pousse
> Les princes hors de leurs honneurs.
>
> (III, 27-28)

«Cette vérité morale...» says Laumonier's note, «vient de Pindare, *Pyth.*, III, 86 et suiv.: 'Une existence sans nuages n'a été donnée ni à Pélée, fils d'Eaque, ni au divin Cadmos; et pourtant on les vante comme les plus fortunés des mortels...'»

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[10] See James Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in France* (Ithaca, 1946), p. 353, n. 39.

[11] «Le visage penché sur la pierre du tombeau.» Note by Laumonier.

[12] See Raymond Lebègue in *L.*, XI, 185 (2e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*).

[13] In the editions of 1578-1587 Ronsard replaced the name of Cadmus with that of Oedipus.

III. Castor and Pollux

Ronsard references to Castor and Pollux (Polydeuces), or to the Dioscuri together, number more than three score,[14] almost as many as those to Achilles, and approximately half as many as those to Heracles.[15] The most significant of these allusions are to that aspect of their myth which tells how Zeus permitted each of the twin brothers by turns to alternate a day of life below the earth with a day among the gods on Olympus.

One of the sonnets of the *Amours* of 1552 (inc. *Dy l'un des deux...*), makes it clear that Ronsard was early acquainted with this essential element of the myth, for he says, not too felicitously, to his lady:

> L'un de tes yeulx dans les enfers me ruë,
> L'aultre à l'envy tour à tour s'esvertuë
> De me rejoindre en paradis encor:
>
> Ainsi tes yeulx pour causer mon renaistre,
> Et puis ma mort, sans cesse me font estre
> Ore un Pollux, & ores un Castor.
>
> (IV, 97)

The following year he returned to the theme in the second edition of the *Amours* in the sonnet *Mon dieu, mon dieu, que ma maistresse est belle*. Torn between the beauty and the cruelty of his lady, he wavers between life and death:

> Ainsi le miel de sa douce beauté
> Nourrit mon cœur: ainsi sa cruauté
> D'aluine[16] amere enamere ma vie.
>
> Ainsi repeu d'un si divers repas,
> Ores je vi, ores je ne vi pas,
> Egal au sort des freres d'Œbalie.[17]
>
> (V, 116-117; cf. VIII, 293, vv. 736-738)

On the last verse Muret wrote a comment on the sacrifice by Pollux in favor of his brother: «Estant egal a Castor & a Pollux qui vivent par renc [i.e. alternativement]. Ces deux furent fils a Lede: mais Pollux fut conceu de la semence de Juppiter: Castor, de celle de Tyndarée. Par ainsi Pollux étoit immortel: Castor, mortel. Avint que Castor fut tué par Meleagre, ou, comme les autres disent, par Polynice. Pollux fut de telle amour vers son

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[14] Most of them are, of course, concentrated in the *Hymne de Pollux et de Castor* (VIII, 293-327).

[15] See Creore, Appendix A.

[16] «C'est une herbe fort amere.» Note by Muret.

[17] So called because Leda, the mother of Castor and Pollux, was the wife of Tyndareus, son of Oebalus.

frere, qu'il pria Juppiter lui permetre, de partir son immortalité aveques lui. Ce qui lui fut accordé: tellement qu'ils vivent & sont au ciel par renc l'un apres l'autre.»[18]

Muret's version of the myth differs from the classic one according to which Castor and Pollux quarrelled with their cousins Idas and Lynceus over the division of spoils captured in a cattle-raid. In the struggle that followed Pollux killed Lynceus and Castor died at the hands of Idas who was in turn slain by a thunderbolt hurled by Zeus. «Variations [of the myth] are endless... The details of the... fight are variously given...»[19] Ronsard's contribution to this diversity, if it was original with him, is not negligible. In his *Hymne de Pollux et de Castor*, the latter fights with Lynceus, rather than Idas, is wounded, but not seriously (VIII, 324, vv. 696-698), and destroys his opponent, while Jupiter «sur le chef d'Idas sa tempeste eslança» (v. 743). Thus both Castor and Pollux survive the struggle in which, by the usual mythological accounts, including that of Pindar in the tenth Nemean, Castor is mortally wounded.

One might suppose, therefore, that Ronsard, in writing his hymn in 1556, the year in which he repudiated Pindar (VIII, 356), must have ignored the Theban's narrative of the myth. Essentially he did, but not entirely. «And Zeus hurled against Idas a smouldering thunderbolt of fire», Pindar writes in the tenth Nemean (71-72), «and in that lonely place they [Idas and Lynceus] were consumed together; for men find it hard indeed to strive with those who are stronger». The almost identical reflection concludes Ronsard's account of the death of Idas: «... ainsi en prent à ceulx Qui veullent quereler à gens plus vaillans qu'eulx» (VIII, 326). The word *gens* suggests that Ronsard refers to Castor and Pollux as warriors superior to Idas and Lynceus. In Pindar's text, however, it is certain that «those who are stronger» are the gods.

The survival of both Castor and Pollux in Ronsard's version is its most serious departure from the traditional classic and Pindaric legend, for it totally exhausts the myth of the moral nobility that Muret, for one, had recognized in the prayer of Pollux to Jupiter. In addition, the salutation that Ronsard addresses at the end to the twin demigods, and which refers to their dwelling alternately in heaven and Hades, becomes an absurdity in significance and in poetic structure:

> Ou soit que vous soyez deux astres, quand l'un erre
> Dans la maison des Dieux, l'autre soit soubz la terre...
> (VIII, 327)

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[18] Marc-Antoine de Muret, *Commentaire* of the *Amours* of 1553, pp. 60-61.

[19] H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology*, pp. 203 and 231.

The incongruity of Ronsard's treatment of the myth is evident even in the light of Muret's brief and rather dry commentary. It becomes strikingly manifest when set beside Pindar's version:

«In alternate changes the twin brethren spend the one day beside their dear father Zeus and, the other, down in the hollow earth in the depths of Therapne, thus fulfilling an equal lot, since, when Castor was slain in war, Polydeuces preferred this to being wholly a god and dwelling in heaven... Then it was that, shedding hot tears, amid moanings, he said aloud: 'O father, son of Cronus! when will there be a release from sorrows? Bid me also die, O king, with my brother...' He ceased, and before him came Zeus, and spake in this wise: 'Thou art my son, whereas Castor was begotten by thy mother's husband, of mortal seed, after thine own conception. But lo! I grant thee thy full choice in this; if thou desirest to escape death and grievous eld, and to dwell thyself in Olympus with me... thou canst have this lot appointed thee. But if thou contendest for thy brother, and art minded to have an equal share with him in all things, then mayest thou breathe for half thy time beneath the earth, and for half thy time in the golden homes of heaven.' When thus the god had spoken, the hero had no double purpose in his heart; and Zeus opened once more the eye, and then released the voice of the bronze-clad warrior, Castor» (Nem., X, 55-90, *passim*).

In Ronsard's hymn, since Castor does not die, but suffers only a superficial wound that does not prevent him from continuing to fight and eventually to destroy his opponent, the depth of Polydeuces' grief and the sublimity of his sacrifice vanish utterly from this strangely distorted version of the legend. The spiritual values of the myth, with its profound symbolism of the terrestrial bonds and celestial affinities of the heroes in alternate movement between the hollow earth of Therapne and «the golden homes of heaven», are singularly reduced in Ronsard's version to four barren words: «Pollux en devint triste» (v. 699).

The preceding account cannot be complete without reference to Norwood's moving analysis (pp. 70-71 and n. 96) of the dialogue between Polydeuces and Zeus, and his demonstration that the hero learns here for the first time that he is the son of Zeus and immortal, a revelation that makes his loyalty to Castor, and his renunciation of an immortal life on Olympus that his brother might not share, one of the sublime examples of Hellenic myth. «At this moment of confused heartbreak and dazzling wonder», Norwood says, «the hero takes his decision without a pause», for Polydeuces, in the words of the poet, «had no double purpose in his heart» (89).[20]

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[18] Cf. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, pp. 182 and 184.

IV. Pelops, Achilles

On 10 July 1547 Guy de Chabot, in the presence of the Court, fought and won a duel against François de Vivonne, seigneur de la Chastaigneraie. The event was celebrated by Ronsard soon afterward in a Pindaric ode, *La Victoire de Gui de Chabot, seigneur de Jarnac*. Laumonier (*RPL*, p. 311), thus describes the situation from the point of view of the victor: «Le seigneur de Jarnac, faible de corps et inexpérimenté, ayant été provoqué en duel par un robuste adversaire, qui passait pour invincible, avait dû se raidir contre l'idée de son infériorité et s'exciter au courage pour recouvrer son honneur.»

Ronsard saw in this confrontation a parallel to a duel of a different sort to which Pindar had alluded in the first Olympian. To win the hand of Hippodamia Pelops would have to defeat her father Oenomaus, king of Elis, in a chariot-race. The latter, in earlier runnings, had already overcome and slain thirteen suitors. In his distress Pelops sought the aid of Poseidon. «He drew near unto the foaming sea, and, alone in the darkness, called aloud on the loudly roaring god of the fair trident: '... stay thou, Poseidon, the brazen spear of Oenomaus, and speed me in the swiftest of all chariots to Elis... as all men must needs die, why should one, sitting idly in the darkness, nurse without aim an inglorious old age...?'» (71-84).

In Ronsard's version Poseidon, has, of course, disappeared, and Chabot addresses words of encouragement to his own soul:

> Une ame lache & couarde
> Au peril ne se hazarde,
> Et d'où vient cela que ceus
> Qui pour mourir ici vivent,
> L'honneste danger ne suivent
> A la vertu paresseus?
> Miserable qui se laisse
> Engloutir à la vieillesse...[21]
> (I, 101)

The moral lesson that Ronsard's Guy de Chabot had learned from Pindar's Pelops was the necessity for men of valor to accept «the Homeric and heroic notion that since men have only a short existence at their disposal, they must make the most of it... The true splendour of Pindar's world lies... in the worth of high endeavours for their own sake as proof of a man's courage and efforts. It is these that bring glory, and glory is the highest happiness and the richest reward in which a man can put his trust».[22] In the prayer of Pelops

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[21] See *POR*, p. 96, for a comparison of the Greek and French texts. — In *L.*, VII, 42, vv. 13-16, and XVIII, 132, vv. 79-82, there are allusions to the race for the hand of Hippodamia.

[22] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 95-96.

to Poseidon we recognize the justification of the life and death of Achilles who embodied the Hellenic model of a heroic human ideal. «Achille est l'image d'une humanité condamnée à mort qui hâte cette mort pour ennoblir sa vie dans le présent et pour en assurer la durée dans l'avenir.»[23]

This vision of the personality of Achilles is derived from the central theme of the *Iliad* and from every part of the epic in which the hero is prominent. More particularly, however, it springs from Achilles' reply in the ninth book to the embassy sent by Agamemnon to solicit the hero's return to the battlefield. Achilles rejects with scorn the offer of rich compensation for the wrong done him by Agamemnon: «Hateful in my eyes are his gifts, I count them at a hair's worth... For my mother the goddess, silver-footed Thetis, telleth me that twofold fates are bearing me toward the doom of death: if I abide here and war about the city of the Trojans, then lost is my home-return, but my renown shall be imperishable; but if I return home to my dear native land, lost then is my glorious renown, yet shall my life long endure, neither shall the doom of death come soon upon me» (378, 410-416).

In Pindar's eighth Isthmian ode (26-60) we encounter once more the silver-footed goddess, her heroic son, and the choice he has made between the twofold fates that await him. The myth that occupies the center of the ode concerns the marriage of Thetis for whose hand Zeus and Poseidon are in contention. But wise-counselling Themis warns them that if Thetis were to marry one of the gods, she would bring to birth a son more powerful than his father. Dissuaded by this prediction, Zeus and Poseidon «gave assent with brows immortal» (46) to the marriage of the goddess with the mortal Peleus. The prophetic words of Themis were verified by the event, for the fruit of that marriage was Achilles, who was indeed more powerful than his father. «And the lips of poets wise made known the youthful prowess of Achilles to those who had heard it not before... And even when dead, he was not forsaken of song, but, beside his funeral pyre and tomb, there stood the maids of Helicon, and poured over him the dirge of many voices. Thus was it proved to be the will of the immortals to make a brave man, even when dead, a theme for the hymns of the goddesses...»

In Ronsard's *Le ravissement de Cephale* Themis, at the wedding of Thetis and Peleus, continues in her prophetic role, and in an aside to the goddess of the sea, renews her prediction of the birth of a son whose fame, too vast for the earth to contain, was destined to shine in the heavens:

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[23] Paul Mazon, *Introduction à l'Iliade*, p. 299. — Cf. Pyth., IV, 184-187 with *L.*, VIII, 259, vv. 76-78; XVIII, 93, vv. 111-115.

... Themis la grand prestresse,
Pleine d'un esprit ardant
La tirant hors de la presse
Lui dist en la regardant:
Bien qu'Inon soit ta compaigne,[24]
Reçoi pourtant doucement
Ton mari, & ne dedaigne
Son mortel embrassement.

Ains que soit la lune entiere
Dix fois, tu dois enfanter
Un qui donnera matiere
Aus Poëtes de chanter.
Le monde pour un tel homme
N'est pas assés spatieus,
Ses vertus reluiront comme
Les étoiles par les cieus.
(II, 146)

V. Heracles, ἥρως θεός

The person and the deeds of Heracles, the deified hero of Thebes, son of Zeus and the mortal Alcmene, are more frequently present in the odes of Pindar than those of any of the others named in the preceding pages. To some extent this may be attributed to Pindar's pride as a Theban, but one remembers in addition that the cult of Heracles entered deeply into the religious experience of every Boeotian. «In nearly every part of Boeotia his worship was established, whether of the hero or of the god; and as regards the Thebans, Isokrates assures us that they honoured him more than any other deity with processions and sacrifices.»[25]

There was still another reason for Pindar's preference. «Heracles was closely associated with athletic prowess, especially at Olympia, where he was the mythical founder of the Games.» But the hero's ethical and religious importance must have been paramount. «Pindar makes much of Heracles because... he is a ἥρως θεός [Nem., III, 22], a god-hero... that is a hero who has become a god in reward for his sufferings and his prowess.»[26] That prowess was exerted, generally as a civilizing influence, in the so-called Twelve Labors of Heracles.

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[24] «Bien que tu sois une divinité de la mer. — Ino... avait été changée en déesse marine par Neptune...» Note by Laumonier.

[25] Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, p. 106, citing Isocrates, *Philipp.*, p. 88. — H.J. Rose, *OCD*, p. 413, col. 2, s.v. *Heracles*, refers to him as «the most popular and widely worshipped of Greek heroes».

[26] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 45-46.

Ronsard's predilection for Heracles is quite as marked as Pindar's. «Trois grands poèmes — *Hylas*, *Le satyre*, et l'*Hercule chrestien* — plusieurs autres de dimensions plus modestes, une dizaine de sonnets, et d'innombrables références d'un vers ou deux mettent le héros au premier rang de tous ces dieux et demi-dieux qui peuplent l'univers poétique de Ronsard... En se sentant attiré et même enthousiasmé par Hercule, Ronsard montre qu'il est vraiment le fils spirituel des auteurs anciens.»[27]

Obviously, however, the grounds for Ronsard's partiality could not have been entirely the same as Pindar's. National pride played almost no role here — references to the Hercule Gaulois are infrequent in Ronsard's poetry,[28] and his allusions to the hero as a religious figure, as a Hellenic demigod, do not possess and cannot carry the deep feelings of the Theban Pindar for one who was worshipped as a divinity in Thebes. In fact, Ronsard's most serious reflections on the religious aspects of the Heracles myth occur in the de-Hellenized *Hercule Chrestien* (VIII, 207-223), which is a systematic effort to present the hero as a prefiguration of Christ and every element of his myth as a prefiguration of parallel moments in the life and activity of Christ.[29] It will also surprise none who know Ronsard to find both the less noble as well as the noblest incidents of the myth employed in erotic contexts, or in passages intended as flattery of sovereigns, statesmen, or members of the nobility.[30] A notable example of the latter occurs in the *Elegie à J. de La Peruse*, in which three such themes are found united at the end: praise of royalty, a promise of immortality to kings who are generous to poets, and the rather surprising, but essentially apposite, elevation of Heracles to a position of equality with Apollo as a leader of the Muses. God, Ronsard says to La Peruse, will draw

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[27] R.E. Hallmark, «Ronsard et la légende d'Hercule», *Lumières de la Pléiade*, p. 255.

[28] See Robert E. Hallowell's two articles, «Ronsard and the Gallic Hercules Myth», *Studies in the Renaissance*, IX (1962), 242-255, and «L'Hercule gallique: expression et image politique», *Lumières de la Pléiade*, pp. 243-253.

[29] See Marcel Simon, *Hercule et le christianisme* (Strasbourg, 1955), which studies the «contacts entre paganisme gréco-romain et christianisme antique» (p. 11); M.R.Jung, *Hercule dans la littérature française du XVI^e siècle* (Geneva, 1966); Pierre Sage, «Autour de l'"Hercule chrétien"», *Bull. des Facultés catholiques de Lyon*, Juillet-Décembre (1960), 5-17; R. Trousson, «Ronsard et la légende d'Hercule», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), 77-87; Claude Faisant, «L'Hercule chrestien de Ronsard. Essai d'interprétation», *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines de Nice*, II (1967), 61-85; *RGTP*, pp. 398-401; Frances A. Yates, *The French Academies*, p. 192; H. Franchet, *Le Poète et son œuvre d'après Ronsard*, pp. 95-102.

[30] C. Faisant, *art. cit.*, pp. 71-72: «Du rang d'"homme-Dieu" et d'égal du Christ, le héros se trouve précipité à celui de grand capitaine, de poète courtisan ou de fade Céladon — quand il n'est pas invoqué comme le patron des amours ancillaires...!» — Not always a «fade Céladon»! See Ronsard's extraordinary description of the intensity of Heracles' love for Iole in the *Elegie à M.A. de Muret*, V, 226-227. According to R.E. Hallmark, *art. cit.*, p. 261, Ronsard here «fait d'Hercule l'amoureux traditionnel du pétrarquisme». That is to slight the heroic dimension in which Ronsard here invests the conventional notion of Petrarchism!

nôtre langue d'enfance:
Je di pourveu que sa race les Rois
Vueillent de grace œillader quelquefois
Leurs pauvres sœurs, ses filles, que Memoire
Lui enfanta pour celebrer sa gloire.
«Car pourneant le poëte sacré
«Chante ses vers s'ils ne viennent à gré
«Aus Rois septrés, en qui gît la tutelle
«Des doctes sœurs, & toute leur sequelle.
«Pource, abondroit nos sages devanceurs
«Logoient Hercule au tenple des neuf sœurs,
«Pour demontrer que leur puissance est morte,
«Si quelque Heros ne leur tient la main forte,
«Et que les vers demeurent déprisés
«Si d'un grand Roi ne sont favorisés,
«Aussi le Roi, quelque chose qu'il face,
«Meurt ingloiré s'il n'achette la grace,
«Par mains presens, d'un poëte savant,
«Qui du tombeau le deterre vivant,
«Et fait toujours d'une plume animée
«Voler par tout sa vive renommée.
(V, 264-265)

«Quant au mythe rappelé ici», Laumonier's note states, «Amadis Jamyn l'a développé dans une pièce intitulée *Hercule défenseur des Muses*.[31] Cette association d'Hercule et des Muses, tout d'abord étrange, s'explique aisément. Dans les gymnases grecs, Hercule était l'objet du culte des éphèbes, et, comme l'éducation hellénique ne séparait pas les exercices du corps de ceux de l'esprit, la gymnastique de la musique (au sens primitif du mot), Hercule devint vite, comme Apollon, un dieu Musagète.»[32]

At the beginning and toward the end of his career Ronsard referred several times to «the highly original story that Pindar invented [in the third Olympian] concerning the Hyperborean journey of the heroic Herakles to bring back the wild olive to Olympia...»[33] where the demigod had established the Games to commemorate the cleansing of the stables of Augeas, king of Elis: «... the laws of Zeus prompt me to sing that famous scene of contest, founded by Heracles... [after he had exacted] from the unwilling and overweening Augeas the wage for his menial service» (Ol., X, 24-25, 28-30).

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[31] It may be read in Samuel M. Carrington's *Amadis Jamyn: Les Œuvres poétiques, Premières poésies et Livre premier* (Geneva, 1973), pp. 188-193.

[32] Cf. Jung, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-132; Trousson, *art. cit.*, p. 83. — O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie und Religionsgeschichte* (Munich, 1906), I, 500, n. 7 from p. 499: «... in Messene stand Herakles neben Apollon und den Musen[.] Paus., IV, 31, 10.»

[33] Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults*, p. 130; cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 302-303.

In the ode *A Madame Marguerite*, written «pour faire l'éloge de la princesse et l'apologie du genre pindarique» (III, p. xiv), Ronsard alludes to this celebrated labor of Heracles, to the institution of the Games, and to the coveted wreath of olive which crowned the victors:

L'estable du grand Roy d'Elide,[34]
Nette par les travaux d'Alcide,
Fonda dans les champs Elëans
D'Olympe les jeux tant illustres,
Qui retournoyent par chascuns Lustres
Anoblir les bords Piseans.

Là, s'amonceloit la jeunesse
Des plus belliqueux de la Grece,
Studieuse à ravir l'honneur
De l'estrange feuille honorée,
Que de la terre Hyperborée
Apporta le Thebain veneur.
(III, 108)

This ode was probably composed in the summer of 1550. It was followed some months later by the *Hymne triumphal sur le trepas de Marguerite de Valois*, which, as Laumonier correctly surmised from the content and the first two words of the title, is a «variété d'ode éminemment pindarique» (III, p. xiv), though not triadic in form. The second strophe refers once more to Heracles' victory over Augeas and to the planting of the olive tree at Olympia:

Assés Pindare a chanté
Les jeux d'Hercule, & sa gloire,
Et son Olivier planté
Pour refreschir la memoire
D'avoir justement du Roy
Puny la parjure foy,
Qui, par folle hardiesse,
En dementant sa promesse
Monstra qu'un foible assaillant
En vain fait braver sa force,
Quant par orgueil il s'efforce
D'assaillir le plus vaillant.[35]
(III, 55)

With respect to the first two verses of this strophe Laumonier wrote (*ibid.*) that Ronsard «se [donnait] des airs d'indépendance à l'égard du maî-

[34] «Sur l'origine des jeux d'Olympie en Elide, cf. Pindare, *Olymp.*, III, str. 2; XI [X in some editions], ép. 3. D'après Richelet, ce passage serait tiré de Stace, *Thébaïde*, chant VI. Cette assertion n'est pas fondée; Ronsard s'est inspiré directement de Pindare et du commentaire que lui en avait fait son maître Dorat.» Note by Laumonier.

[35] The last four verses are an amplification of Ol., X, 39-40: «Hard it is to rid oneself of strife with them that are stronger than ourselves.»

tre grec». It is true that such an interpretation seems justified by the wording, but in 1550, not long after the creation of the fifteen Pindaric odes, and only a few months after the composition of the immense poem to Michel de l'Hospital, Ronsard must have been experiencing the glory of having endowed French literature with this remarkable new form. His intention in writing «Assés Pindare a chanté Les jeux d'Hercule, & sa gloire», as Laumonier himself was on the point of realizing, was not to declare his independence of Pindar — that would come a few years later in 1556 (see VIII, 356) — but rather to present the arduous spiritual life of Marguerite de Valois, Queen of Navarre, under the metaphor of the agon established by Heracles. For Ronsard continues in the immediate sequel:

Mais moy hâtant de mes vers
La vagabonde carriere,
J'annonce par l'univers
L'honneur de cette Guerriere:
Laquelle apprise aux combas
Ses cheveux n'ombragea pas
D'une si fresle couronne
Que celle que Pise donne:
Mais bien les environna
De sa depouille dontée,
Lors que par soy surmontée
Soi-mesme se couronna.
(III, 55-56)

Ronsard's allusions to Pindar's glorification of Heracles, the Games, and the olive wreath of victory as the reward of courage and physical achievement, are thus seen as symbolic of Marguerite's infinitely superior victory of the spirit. The hymn is, as Laumonier indicated (III, 56, n. 3), an already traditional «rapprochement entre la lutte de l'âme chrétienne et l'ἄγων des athlètes d'Olympie».

When in 1575 Nicolas Le Sueur (Sudorius) published his Latin translation of Pindar, the first by a Frenchman, Ronsard celebrated the event in a sonnet (inc. *Ni l'olivier sacré...*) full of hyperbolic praise (XVII, 355). In *Les Parques*, published in the first posthumous edition of 1587, hyperbole governed the words of the Fates standing about the cradle of the infant who was to become Henri III of France and king of Poland:

Pour rendre sa vertu davantage honoree
Hercule alla courir la terre Hyperboree:
Et tu dois commander en ceste part, où droict
Le Pole Boreal roidist tousjours de froit.
(XVIII, 236)

The choice ordained by destiny for Achilles was between a long and secure life of humdrum apathy or a short life of ideal activity. The decisive incident, called the Choice of Heracles, in the life of the Theban hero pre-

sents him with different alternatives from those of Achilles, but the end elected by each was the same. The legendary Heracles is often portrayed as excelling in physical force, brutality, theft, gluttony, sexual exploits, and the like. «Cependant, la conception du héros évolue. Nous voyons se préciser l'idée d'un Hercule qui représente la force morale, autant et peut-être même plus que la force physique. Dans le deuxième livre de ses *Mémoires sur Socrate*, Xénophon rapporte d'après le sophiste Prodicus [5th century B.C.] l'histoire du Choix d'Hercule. Celui-ci, au seuil de l'âge viril s'est retiré à l'écart pour réfléchir. A ce moment-là, il est abordé par deux jeunes femmes séduisantes, la Vertu et la Volupté. Après avoir écouté leurs discours il choisit la Vertu et se détermine à suivre pour le reste de sa vie le long chemin pénible qui mène à l'immortalité.»[36]

The Choice of Heracles clearly indicated the direction that was already being taken by interpreters of the myth in the gradual elevation of the hero to apotheosis. He came to symbolize a «lutte inlassable contre les perversités des pulsions corporelles»,[37] and his incessant striving toward self-conquest was rewarded by his acceptance among the Olympians. «Déjà le grand lyrisme choral des VI^e^ et V^e^ siècles, avec Stésichore et Pindare, avait interprété les traditions de l'âge épique suivant les exigences d'une religion en voie d'épuration.»[38]

A similar process of symbolic interpretation of myths is present in Ronsard generally and with respect to the legend of Heracles in particular: «Il s'est fait avec raison une idée très haute du poète et de sa mission, d'après Pindare, Platon et Horace... Il a pensé avec raison que l'essence de la poésie est le symbolisme, qui se traduit par le mythe, l'allégorie, la personnification, la comparaison, la métaphore, et l'image» (*RPL*, p. 420). But it would be an error to suppose that the movement toward the deification of Heracles in Ronsard's poetry can be represented by the hero's unbroken ascension to «his hallowed home in the presence of Zeus» (Nem., I, 72). The determining factors were always the immediate constraints — courtly, erotic, mundane, pseudo-religious — influencing the composition upon which the poet was at the moment engaged, not some preconceived notion of Heracles' spiritual evolution. Yet in spite of the lighter uses to which Ronsard sometimes put

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[36] Hallmark, *art. cit.*, p. 256; cf. p. 264. — See Ronsard's *La Vertu Amoureuse* (X, 337-348), in which these «deux jeunes femmes séduisantes» are described. — Erwin Panofsky's *Hercules am Scheidewege*, pp. 42-52, gives a meticulously thorough account of this aspect of the hero's myth.

[37] P. Diel, *Le symbolisme dans la mythologie grecque. Etude psychanalytique* (1952), p. 206, quoted by R. Trousson, *art. cit.* (above, n. 29), p. 77.

[38] P. Sage, *art. cit.* (above, n. 29), p. 13.

the events of this legendary figure's life, it is easy to discern a permanent attention to the most elevated ethical and religious aspects of the myth much as these are set forth in the odes of Pindar.

Almost the first words of Jean Seznec's *La Survivance des dieux antiques* (pp. 13-14) are related to the manner in which the gods were thought to have arisen from among mankind: «Les philosophes, à commencer par Aristote, reconnaissaient dans l'âme humaine un élément divin, dont les Stoïciens précisaient ainsi la nature: 'Deus est mortali juvare mortalem et haec ad aeternam gloriam via.' 'Dieu, c'est le bien que l'homme fait à l'homme, et tel est le chemin de la gloire éternelle.'[39] Noble formule que Cicéron développe ainsi dans les *Tusculanes*: 'Ceux-là portent en leur âme un élément surnaturel et sont promis à l'immortalité qui se sentent nés pour aider, défendre et sauver l'humanité. Hercule est passé au nombre des dieux: il n'y serait jamais passé s'il ne l'avait mérité pendant le temps qu'il vivait parmi les hommes...' (*Tusc.*, I, 32; cf. *ibid.*, 25-26 et *De nat. deor.*, II, 24).» When Bowra wrote that for Heracles «godhead comes at the end of a tireless life of toil», or «after a life of unsurpassed toil, with his reward on Olympus», (*Pindar.*, pp. 93, 177), it went without saying that the toil in question was on behalf of men, and on occasion even on behalf of the gods.

In the first Nemean Teiresias prophesies at the birth of Heracles «... what fortunes the boy was destined to encounter, — how many lawless monsters he would slay... and he said that there was one most hateful [Antaeus]... whom he would do to death. He said, moreover, that when the gods shall meet the giants in battle on the plain of Phlegra, their foes shall soon find their bright tresses befouled with dust beneath that hero's rushing arrows, but he himself, at rest from mighty labours, shall have allotted to him, as his choicest prize, peace that would endure for ever in the homes of bliss, where, on receiving Hebe as his fair bride... he shall glorify his hallowed home in the presence of Zeus the son of Cronus» (61-72). Heracles' beneficence toward men is recounted also in the fourth Isthmian, which dwells at somewhat greater length on the hero's struggle with Antaeus, his good will toward men, his apotheosis, and his union with immortal Hebe: «Yet, once on a time, from Thebes, the city of Cadmus, there went a hero, short in stature, but in soul unflinching, even to the home of Antaeus, in corn-bearing Libya, to wrestle with him and to stay him from roofing Poseidon's temple with the skulls of strangers, even Alcmene's son; who to Olympus passed, after he had tracked out all the lands and even the cliff-girt level of the foaming

[39] «Pline, *H.N.*, II, 7, 18, qui très probablement traduit Posidonius.» Note by Seznec.

sea, and had tamed the wild straits for the seamen. And now he dwelleth beside [Zeus] the aegis-bearer, lord of a happiness supreme, by the immortals honoured as a friend; and is wedded to Hebe, is king of a golden home, and husband of Hera's daughter» (52-60).

It is certain that Ronsard did not depend exclusively on Pindar for his knowledge of the myth of Heracles and that his references to the adventures of the hero sometimes emphasized the purely physical aspects of his achievements. In the *Elegie à M.A. de Muret* the poet takes his point of departure from the notion of the universal sovereignty of Eros over all creatures, even the mighty Heracles:

> Et qu'est-il rien que ce garson ne brule?
> Ce porteciel, ce tugeant Hercule
> Le sentit bien, je di ce fort Thebain
> Qui le Sangler étrangla de sa main,
> Qui tua Nesse...
>
> (V, 225)

What follows is a list of some of the traditional Labors of Heracles and a number of his other exploits. But there is hardly any explicit suggestion in this original version of the elegy (1553) of Heracles as a civilizing influence.[40]

Apart from the *Hercule Chrestien*, in which the piety of the intention does not justify either the questionable taste or the systematic distortions of the exegesis, Ronsard's most serious effort to discredit the evil reports that had since antiquity impaired the image of Heracles occurs in *Hylas* (1569). The process of the rehabilitation of the hero is an ancient one — it is already visible in the ninth Olympian, in which Pindar rejects as blasphemous the legend that Heracles had fought against Poseidon, Apollo, and Hades: «Cast away this word, O my lips! since to speak evil of the gods is a skill that is hateful... Babble not of such themes as these; let war and all battle remain far from the imortals...» (35-41). Perhaps Ronsard owed nothing to this passage but he was well aware of Pindar's refusal to accept myths that dishonored the gods or the demigods.[41]

This refusal was the controlling idea of the prelude to *Hylas*:

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[40] In 1578 Ronsard rewrote the obscure 27th verse: «Bref ce Heros qui demonstra la terre», to read: «Bref cest Heros correcteur de la terre.» In the editions that appeared between 1560 and 1572, on the verb *demonstra* there was a note attributed to Muret, but very probably supplied by Ronsard: «qui osta les monstres de la terre.»

[41] Ronsard had studied with care the first Olympian in which he had read verses (35, 52) rejecting the attribution of ignoble actions to the gods.

Je veux, Hercule, autant qu'il m'est possible,
Chanter ton nom, & ton bras invincible,
Pour recompense heureuse des bienfaits
Qu'à noz François autrefois tu as faits,[42]
Te redonnant l'honneur que tu merites:
Que des malings les chansons bien escrites
Avoient honny, te faisant un volleur,
Forçeur d'enfans, de femmes violeur,
Brigant, larron, & pour te rendre infame
T'ont fait meurdrir tes enfans & ta femme,
Fol de cerveau, vagabond de fureur:
Bref ilz t'ont fait la cloacque d'erreur,
Tyran meschant: mais c'est bien le contraire:
Car tu apris aux vieux François à faire
Toutes vertus, & par ta douce voix
Les retiras come feres des bois,
Pour habiter les chateaux & les villes,
Haïr la faine, & les glands inutilles,
Semer le blé, cultiver les bons vins,
Honorer Dieu, reverer les voisins.
Ce ne sont pas les faitz d'un meschant home:
Et toutefois l'antiquité te nome
Gourmand, meschant: mais certes ce n'est moy,
Qui suis, Hercule, & François, & à toy.
(XV, 234-245)

Prompted by his wish to restore the reputation of Heracles as a harbinger of civilization, Ronsard also rejected the ancient story of the hero's crimes against the parents of Hylas and against the lad himself in words that are unmistakably Pindaric in tone and substance: «Ce sont des faits que croire je ne veux» (v. 68).

From a very early time Ronsard had felt the full symbolic force of the career of Heracles that was destined to liberate the hero from all terrestrial bonds and raise him to Olympus, «by the immortals honoured as a friend». One of the great sonnets of the *Amours* of 1552 was inspired by this theme. It may at first seem paradoxical that a profound intuitive sense of this symbolism liberated the thought and poetic sweep of Ronsard's imagination from the artificial constraints which in so many other erotic contexts worked to benumb his creative faculty in an anesthetizing Petrarchism. As he was to write a decade later in the *Responce aux injures* (1563):

Les Poëtes gaillards ont artifice à part,
Ils ont un art caché qui ne semble pas art
Aux versificateurs, d'autant qu'il se promeine
D'une libre contrainte, où la Muse le meine.
(XI, 160)

[42] «Allusion au mythe de l'Hercule Gaulois...» Note by Laumonier. In reality, however, the distinction in *Hylas* between the French Hercules and the Greek Heracles is quite vague, and the Gallic hero's presence is little felt.

Few better examples can be found in Ronsard's poetry of this «libre contrainte» than the 139th sonnet of the *Amours* for Cassandre, which gives nobility of movement, expression, sentiment, and idea to a theme that risked being asphyxiated in the all too frequent banalities of the amorous sonnets:

> Je veus brusler pour m'en voler aux cieux,
> Tout l'imparfait de ceste escorce humaine.
> M'eternisant, comme le filz d'Alcméne.
> Qui tout en feu s'assit entre les Dieux.
>
> Ja mon esprit chatouillé de son mieux,
> Dedans ma chair, rebelle se promeine,
> Et ja le bois de sa victime ameine
> Pour m'enflammer aux rayons de tes yeulx.
>
> O sainct brazier, ô feu chastement beau,
> Las, brusle moy d'un si chaste flambeau
> Qu'abandonant ma despouille cognue,
>
> Nét, libre, & nud, je vole d'un plein sault,
> Oultre le ciel, pour adorer là hault
> L'aultre beaulté dont la tienne est venue.[43]
>
> (IV, 134-135)

On the fourth verse Laumonier has the following note: «Hercule, qui se brûla sur le mont Œta... Remarquer l'interprétation morale de ce mythe païen, reprise par Ronsard dans son *Hymne de l'Hercule chrestien* [VIII, 220-221].» Farnell, in his *Greek Hero Cults* (p. 170), fills out this rather laconic comment: «The story, as it has been handed down to us, has the sharp intensity and moral pathos of high tragedy and a marked epic character in the long sequence of effects and in the fatal interaction of will, passion, and destiny. The death of Nessos and his guileful dying gift to Deianeira, her innocent jealousy of her reckless and unfaithful hero-husband, his secret passion for Iole... the present of the poisoned shirt sent by his loving and faithful wife which at the moment of his triumph smites him with a long and intolerable agony, his heroic self-immolation on the pyre and his ascension from the fiery flames to the heaven that he had earned — no greater story

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[43] See Henri Weber, «Platonisme et sensualité dans la poésie amoureuse de la Pléiade», *Lumières de la Pléiade*, p. 175. Cf. Joachim Du Bellay's treatment of the same theme, ed. Chamard, I, 146. — Both Ronsard and Du Bellay were writing in an ancient tradition. Cf. Marcel Simon, *op. cit.*, (above, n. 29), p. 129: «L'exégèse allégorisante des philosophes trouve à son mythe spiritualisé [de Hercule] un sens plus profond. Ses exploits signifient le triomphe de l'homme sur lui-même et sur ses passions. Symbole tragique et grandiose de la destinée humaine, martyr de la vertu, image de la perfection et de toute sagesse, Hercule est le modèle, humain et divin tout à la fois, que Cyniques et Stoïciens ont sans cesse devant les yeux. Il a vaincu le mal, terrassé les puissances infernales, gagné à travers la souffrance l'apothéose glorieuse.»

has come down to us from the creative genius of Greece or from any generation of the older world.»

Again and again Ronsard returned to the theme of the self-sacrifice of Heracles,[44] to which the odes of Pindar do not refer, but his most sensitively realized treatment of it remained the first, the sonnet of 1552. The prediction by the spirit of Hylas, who had lost his life in the Argonautic expedition, of the future labors of Heracles and of his eventual apotheosis, is a touching valedictory and a reminder of the celestial affinities that drew this earthy hero to a place at the table of the gods:

A Dieu Seigneur, à Dieu ma chere teste,
Par ton haineux[45] meinte & meinte conqueste
Te reste encor, & mille maux divers
Que tu auras vaguant par l'univers,
Puis à la fin une mort trescruelle
Doibt consomer ta figure mortelle.
Dessus un mont tu bruleras ton corps
Par la douleur que dedans & dehors
Tu sentiras d'une chemise ouvrée
Au vilain sang du Centaure eniveée:
Ainsy brulé t'en iras dans les Cieux,
Tu prendras place à la table des Dieux:
Puis pour loyer de ta forte prouësse
Doibs espouser [Hébé] l'immortelle Jeunesse:
«Car les beaux faits de l'home vertueux
«Ne meurent point: mais du voluptueux,
«Qui a sa vie en plaisirs consommée,
«Avecq la mort se perd la renommée.
Ainsy Hylas à son maistre parla
La nuit s'enfuit et l'Ombre s'envola.
(XV, 251-252)

R. Trousson concluded his study of Ronsard and the legend of Heracles with this just observation: «Au total, Ronsard a renouvelé les valeurs poétiques, éthiques et philosophiques de la légende d'Hercule; il l'a insérée dans un contexte nouveau et l'a fait participer de toute sa richesse au patrimoine de la pensée humaniste.»[46]

VI. Ethics and Poetry in Pindar

The consensus of opinion supporting the view presented in the preceding pages on the ethical substance of Pindar's odes is broad but not complete.

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[44] In VIII, 82-83; XII, 293; XVI, 189; XVIII, 237.

[45] «Eurysthée, instrument de la haine de Junon pour Hercule.» Note by Laumonier.

[46] *Art. cit.* (above, n. 29), p. 87.

Notable exception was taken to it by Gilbert Norwood in 1945. His position has the merit of clarity; it is stated on the first page of his book and repeatedly thereafter with uncompromising vigor.

«The aim of art», he says (p. 1), is, finally, to create and satisfy in us a deeper relish for existence... That is why art has no concern with morality... If I were asked to account for my love of Pindar's work... the truth is... that he fills me with triumphant illumination... Pindar, more than any other consummate author known to me, is practically valueless save for one superb merit.» «[Pindar] was among those few to whom beauty has been more fundamental than virtue or happiness» (pp. 30-31)... «Let us drive straight at the heart of this, and point to his most fatal irrationality — an ambiguous use of the word *areta*. There are, perhaps in all languages, words that sum up root-ideas of the race which uses them, and are accordingly the translator's despair: *areta* is one of these» (pp. 48-49). Norwood devotes a page to an analysis of Pindar's double standard of ethics toward gods and men by listing the immoral activities of the gods which the poet either does not condemn or openly approves, but which he would condemn in men, for example, «Zeus' amour with Alcmena, a uniquely atrocious affair (as we should say) on which Pindar thrice dwells fondly, in one place citing it among the glories of Theban history» (p. 57). As for Pindar's maxims... «they cannot be organized into a body of doctrine... these maxims are uniformly trite and obvious... Morality does not make great poetry, or poetry at all» (p. 69).[47]

One realizes how sharply divergent or, more exactly, how nearly contradictory, are the views of scholars on the question of ethics and poetry in Pindar, if one sets Norwood's observations beside the quotations that precede them in the earlier sections of the present chapter, or if one comapres them with the following comment by Farnell on the third Pythian: «The poem... testifies strongly how Pindar is possessed through and through with the moralising spirit: he cannot speak of the mythic past or the real present without moralising; and he is never more a poet than when he moralises» (I, 97).

Yet despite Norwood's repeated assertions that Pindar failed to define elementary moral ideas, that it was fatally irrational to make ambiguous use of the word *areta*,[48] that morality does not make great poetry or any poetry, he eventually had to recognize the ethical aspects of certain of Pindar's odes,

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[47] Cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 76: «The gods... are not for Pindar guardians of morality...» «he is not a moral philosopher».

[48] Pindar could not have used the word unambiguously, nor perhaps could any other Greek poet. As Norwood, quoting Dornseiff, points out (p. 224, n. 22), *areta* has a great variety of meanings. To have used the word with the precision that might have muted Norwood's criticism, Pindar would have had to abandon poetry for lexicography.

and he did so with a force of conviction approaching that of Farnell. Thus he writes (p. 60), «Of the judgment after death... an august picture is given by the Second Olympian, where for the first time in European literature we hear the tremendous doctrine that reward and punishment for the deeds of earthly life are meted out in another, on a principle moral and moral only.» The second Olympian was written in 476 B.C., yet Norwood says (p. 55), that «a passage in his latest-written ode [the eighth Pythian, 446 B.C.] shows him groping towards the concept of a universe morally governed».

The second Olympian and eighth Pythian, as Norwood himself interprets them, are enough to raise serious questions about the validity of his thesis. That thesis cannot endure confrontation with the first Pythian ode, composed in 470, more than two decades before Pythian VIII.

Scholars are aware that one of Norwood's contributions to Pindaric studies was the concept, developed in Chapters V, VI, and VII of his book, «that symbolism gives the key to full appreciation of Pindar» (p. 100). He held that in a number of instances the discovery of the central symbol of an ode would help to reveal its significance. In the case of the first Pythian that symbol, he said, was the Lyre (p. 102).

Norwood, who has given us one of the most intellectually and aesthetically rewarding interpretations of the first Pythian (pp. 101-105), knew that the Lyre was the profoundly ethical symbol of an ode whose essential substance is constituted of ethical considerations. In the comments that introduce his discussion of the ode we read that «it is not impossible for the symbol to typify some moral doctrine. But that matters nothing: it happens in the poet's private thought before he begins to create his poem: it explains, at most, only his choice of a myth» (p. 101). We are left to conclude that the poet's private thought in the hours, or days, or possibly years in the case of an epoch-making poem, that preceded the composition of his ode, and was, in fact, the *sine qua non* of its coming into being, ceased at the moment he raised the stylus. Nevertheless, Norwood states, «This ode is the most sublime of all lyrical poems: even less open to doubt is its supremacy as a masterpiece of poetical architecture, whereby thoughts, emotions, and interests that might seem utterly distinct are wrought into wondrous unity. Pindar has left us other poems as beautiful, none so noble» (p. 101).

Rarely has criticism of this ode been more understanding or praise more justly bestowed. The first Pythian is indeed one of the noble and sublime lyrical creations of Greek, of European, literature. And no particular penetration is required to see that Norwood was using the notions of sublimity and nobility in an ethical, not an aesthetic, connotation, for the last quoted sentence excludes the second possibility by its explicit distinction between the beautiful and the noble.

Norwood's manifest acceptance in the first Pythian of an ethical element of both cosmic and human scope is visible in his brilliant paraphrase of the

prelude: «Thus at the outset Zeus and the other gods are proclaimed lovers of the Lyre, his enemies are its enemies — creatures of disharmony and chaos: at once it has grown into all that Plato meant by μουσική, and more — the spirit of serenity, order, concord throughout the Universe opposing and holding in subjection whatever makes for turbulence, jarring discord, the disruption of all. Then the poet with magical dexterity swings into the orbit of this cosmic thought today's human festival. For of those fiendlike Titans, enemies of Zeus, is the hundred-headed Typhos... upon his shaggy bosom stands the heaven-reaching column, crested with unmelting snows — Aetna, the forehead of this fruitful land» (p. 102).

Surely, near the end of his life, Pindar in the eighth Pythian of 446, was no longer «groping towards the concept of a universe morally governed». He had revealed that concept in absolute plenitude more than a score of years earlier in the first Pythian of 470, a concept of cosmic sweep that might serve, and was intended by Pindar, and later by Plato, to serve as an ethical paradigm for human existence. «Of the final triad», Norwood writes (pp. 104-105), «two stanzas urge the dignity, tact, justice and sincerity needed by a great ruler, and remind him [Hieron] of 'that fierce light which beats upon a throne'... In this way his [Pindar's] personal advice is brought, like all the rest, into the orbit of his great conception, civilization as the world's music. And... the Golden Lyre is heard again in those beautiful lines that briefly contrast two other famous princes, Phalaris the Agrigentine, a name of horror throughout the West, and Croesus, whom Delphi and Delphi's loyal worshipper hold in grateful remembrance. Concerning Phalaris we hear only that he is beset by hostile *talk* [Norwood's emphasis], a last echo of the struggle between Heaven and the Titans; but the righteous and kindly Lydian wins melodious acclaim: 'Lyre-music beneath the rafters welcomes him amid boyish voices to gentle fellowship.' The Lyre is named at the close, as at the outset, joined now to youthful human song that breathes peace and friendship.»[49]

A word must still be said about what is perhaps the most surprising and least relevant of Norwood's comments.

In Chapter III, in which he seeks to establish the position that Pindar had no ethical system, he has invoked the canons of logic in a literary environment not hospitable to them. For like most poets Pindar never intended to create an ethical system. There is, I would suggest, a methodological fallacy

[49] The second Olympian and the first and eighth Pythian odes are not the only ones that Norwood extolls for their ethical grandeur. See his deeply moving words (pp. 70-71) on «the sublimity of Polydeuces' choice, which raised up his dying brother to share his immortality», and on the epiphany of Zeus, whose revelation of the paternity of Polydeuces gave that choice its profound moral significance.

underlying Norwood's attempt: it is the unstated assumption that a poet of the 6th to 5th centuries B.C. can and ought to be held to standards of intellectual precision, systematic organization, and hard logic that modern science and thought demand of researchers and philosophers. This is immensely more than modern critics require of contemporary poets, let alone of poets who lived much closer to the birth of the art. The criterion of logic and consistency employed by Norwood, if applied to Homer and Hesiod, would make them, too, appear as lacking an ethical system, as it would all but a philosophical poet like Dante. Homer and Hesiod, and even Pindar, belong to a period, and reflect earler periods, in which Greek thought and sentiment were finding themselves, and making invaluable ethico-aesthetic discoveries amidst the residues and contradictions of their frequently brutal mythological inheritance. Who has the gift to draw, and where shall he draw, the line of distinction between the moral and aesthetic beauty of the desolating scene in the 24th book of the *Iliad* when Priam pleads with Achilles for the body of his son Hector? or to separate the sublimity of Polydeuces' sacrifice in the tenth Nemean from the sublimity of his words and those of his divine father in which that sacrifice is consummatted?[50]

VII. The Good, the True, and the Beautiful[51]

Norwood touches the heart of Pindar's thought in the first Pythian when he says «at once it has grown into all that Plato meant by μουσική», that is to say, poetry in its most elevated spiritual and philosophical form, supported by the sister arts of music and the dance — «La Poesie & la Musique seurs» (I, 32). For the initiation into the highest level of the life of the spirit is brought about by poetry, that marvellous instrument, as Marrou calls it (p. 232), which enchants the soul and, «par des voies secrètes, induit dans le cœur une certaine connaissance intuitive du vrai, du beau et du bien...»

There is a striking correspondence between the first Pythian and Plato's *Timaeus*. The cosmic struggle of Zeus against Typhon in Pindar's ode is presented with such overwhelming power and beauty that one runs the risk of being momentarily distracted from its real meaning and purpose, which is to

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[50] In an excellent article on «The Good and the Beautiful in Montaigne», *FRSS*, p. 227, Abraham C. Keller soon faces the same problem and asks a related question: whether certain vices «are loathsome to Montaigne because they are ugly or because they are wicked».

[51] Henri Franchet in *Le Poète et son œuvre d'après Ronsard* has devoted pp. 43-113 to «La Vertu» and pp. 177-198 to «La Vérité poétique». They merit the serious attention of every student of Ronsard. The present section has been developed along rather different lines, but inevitably it covers some of the same ground.

give utmost prominence, in contrast with the monstrous creatures terrified by the Muses' song, to the civilizing role for mankind of the lyre, of μουσική. In his edition of the *Timaeus* (p. 7), Albert Rivaud has noticed a similar tendency among students of that dialogue to stray from Plato's fundamental thought: «... les commentateurs anciens et modernes se sont surtout attachés à ce qui touche la cosmologie. Le récit de la formation de l'Ame du Monde, la théorie du lieu et des éléments, le système astronomique les ont particulièrement attirés. Pourtant, et si intéressantes que soient ces connaissances, ce n'est pas là qu'est, aux yeux de Platon lui-même, l'essentiel du *Timée*. Pour Platon, sans aucun doute, la partie maîtresse de l'ouvrage est celle qui est relative à l'homme. C'est en vue de cette partie, pour la préparer et l'annoncer, que tout le reste a été rédigé.»

The accuracy of this interpretation may be judged from the following passage of the *Timaeus* itself (88 C): «Il faut donc que le mathématicien et quiconque exerce énergiquement quelque activité intellectuelle, donne aussi du mouvement à son corps et qu'il pratique la gymnastique. Inversement celui qui cultive soigneusement son corps doit aussi donner à l'âme les mouvements compensateurs; s'adonner à la musique et à la philosophie dans son ensemble, s'il veut qu'on puisse l'appeler à juste titre à la fois bon et beau... C'est selon la même règle qu'il faut prendre soin également des différentes parties du corps et de l'âme, en imitant la forme de l'univers tout entier» (trans. Rivaud, pp. 222-223).[52]

The beautiful and the good were seen by Plato, and a century earlier by Pindar in the first Pythian, as intimately related to the discipline of music. For Plato the ethical distinction between καλός, the beautiful, and ἀγαθός, the good, was more a convenience of discourse than a representation of reality. On the phrase in 88 C which brings the two terms together Rivaud's note comments: «ἅμα μὲν καλός, ἅμα δὲ ἀγαθός [beautiful and good at once], décomposition curieuse de l'expression καλός τε κἀγαθός [beautiful and good], qui est souvent employée dans les dialogues...»

With respect to the source of Plato's concept of the beautiful, Jacqueline Duchemin believes that «Nous plongeons assurément ici très loin dans les siècles, dans ce passé dont la poésie seule, alors seule mémoire de l'humanité, pouvait transmettre les échos. De là vient assurément l'impulsion première dont l'aboutissement, dans la philosophie platonicienne, est la place de premier plan accordée au Beau dans la hiérarchie des Idées. Parmi tant de pages où le Beau est ainsi envisagé... le mythe du *Timée* n'est pas le moins digne d'attention. C'est presque une identité qui s'y trouve établie entre le Beau et le Bien; ils sont du moins inséparables, et l'auteur affirme en plus d'un pas-

[52] Cf. *RGL*, Part I, p. 25.

sage leur lien ontologique: la beauté suprême du monde prouve que l'Ouvrier l'a façonné d'après le modèle éternel (29 a-b); surtout il ne saurait être permis au Très Bon de rien créer d'autre que de Très Beau (30 a)...»[53]

Viewed in this light, the correspondence between the first Pythian, indeed between the triumphal odes of Pindar in general, and the *Timaeus*, is remarkable not only for the identity of the remote sources upon which both poet and philosopher draw, but also for the identity of the ideal toward which they strive. «The *epinikion*», says Gildersleeve (p. xviii), «lifts the temporary victory to the high level of the eternal prevalence of the beautiful and the good over the foul and the base...»

With his customary lucidity Croiset, who had devoted a section of his book to «L'idéal moral de Pindare» (pp. 230-240), understood that the lyric poet, as an artist, and notwithstanding the profundity of his moral convictions, was essentially an «homme d'imagination plus que de raison froide, épris du beau plus que du vrai, mené par ses admirations plus que par ses convictions, soumis aux lois de son art comme le savant ou le philosophe sont soumis aux règles d'une saine méthode» (p. 144). Nevertheless, though Pindar's spirit, like that of every great artist, was inhabited by a paramount concern for beauty, one cannot be inattentive to the meaning of his apostrophe to «Truth, the daughter of Zeus», or to the significance of his description of «Time [as] the sole declarer of the very truth» (Ol., X, 3-4, 53-55), a thought which Ronsard saw engraved in Latin in the stones of La Possonnière: *Veritas filia temporis*. Neither can one be deaf to the truth and blind to the beauty of Pindar's prayer: «Queen of Truth, who art the beginning of great virtue, keep my good-faith from stumbling against rough falsehood» (frag. 205, p. 609). Passages like these must have led Leopold Schmidt to write in *Die Ethik der alten Griechen*, I, 14: «Aber auch eine hohe Anerkennung der persönlichen und der geselligen Tugenden, der Maasshaltung und des energischen Ringens, der Gastfreundschaft und der Dankbarkeit, *vor Allem der Wahrhaftigkeit* [my emphasis], kommt bei Pindar auf der mannigfachste zu Worte...» The greatest Roman disciple of Pindar would write «Non satis est pulchra esse poemata...» (Horace, *A.P.*, 99).

The significance of Horace's observation must have been present to the mind of Wilamowitz when he contrasted Bacchylides' attentiveness to the melodious quality of his verse with Pindar's lack of concern for euphony: «Auch seine Verse erreichen kaum je den schmeichelnden Wohlklang des Bakchylides: für manche sonst allgemein anerkannte Wohllautsregeln scheint er gar kein Ohr gehabt zu haben.» But this and other minor imperfections in no way diminish Pindar's stature. «Und doch» Wilamowitz

[53] «Platon et l'héritage de la poésie», *Revue des études grecques*, LXVIII (1955), 31.

continues, «ist er einer der wahrhaft Grosse, wenn anders eine grosse Seele und das höchste Streben auch eines Dichters Grösse bedingt: Dichter war er, weil er nur so zu seinem Volke und zu der Menschheit reden konnte. Er hat immer etwas zu sagen, mehr als er sagt, und jedes Ereignis sieht er von der Warte des apollinischen Propheten: jeder Glückwunsch wird ihm zu dem delphischen Grusse 'Mensch, erkenne, was du bist'; jeder Erfolg schliesst die Mahnung an die Ritterpflichten in sich; er erzählt keine Geschichte, sie diene denn dazu, des Himmels Macht und Gnade gegenüber der irdischen Unzulänglichkeit zu beleuchten.»[54]

It is only because the beauty of Pindar's odes is imperishable that we read them. But the foundation of Pindar's thought is Greek morality, and our sympathy with him can be no deeper than our sympathy with the moral conceptions of Greece. These conceptions are not fundamentally different from our own, but certain emphases did emerge in Greece which resulted in the isolation of moral concepts like that of *hubris* (wanton violence, pride, insolence, presumption), on the one hand, and *sophrosune* (moderation, self-control, temperance), on the other, in a form more distinct than has been customary among other peoples. This moral environment was the inheritance of every Greek writer, and it is because Pindar is a part of this environment, because he speaks from the midst of a culture that is thought of his thought, that an intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical unity was possible in his odes.[55]

From the standpoint of his great work on Greek education and culture Werner Jaeger wrote words which apply here, I believe, with particular cogency: «The Greek trinity of poet, statesman and sage (ποιητὴς, πολιτικὸς, σοφός) embodied the nation's highest ideal of leadership. In that atmosphere of spiritual liberty, bound by deep knowledge (as if by a divine law) to the service of the community, the Greek creative genius conceived and attained that lofty educational ideal which sets it far above the more superficial artistic and intellectual brilliance of our individualistic civilization. That is what lifts Greek classical literature out of the category of pure aesthetics, in which many have vainly tried to understand it, and gives it the immeasurable influence on human nature which it has exercised for thousands of years» (*Paideia*, I, p. xxvi).

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[54] Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff *et al.*, *Die griechische und lateinische Literatur und Sprache* (Leipzig, Berlin, 1912³), p. 52.

[55] On the continuity of Pindar's ethical thought with that of Homer, Hesiod, Solon, and Theognis, see the article by A.W. Mair, «Sin (Greek)», in James Hastings *et al.*, eds., *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, XI (1921), 548-554.

It would be as easy as it would be unfortunate to infer from certain isolated passages in Ronsard, that his attitude toward truth in general, and toward the relationship of truth to the good and the beautiful, was lighthearted and lightheaded.

Take, for example, these words to the Predicant in the *Responce aux injures*:

Certes non plus qu'à moy ta teste n'est pas saine,
Et pour ce, Predicant, faisons une neufaine,
Où? à S. Mathurin, car à nous voir tous deux
Nos cerveaux esventés sont bien avertineux.[56]
Tu sembles aux enfans qui contemplent es nues
Des rochers, des Geans, des Chimeres cornues,
Et ont de tel object le cerveau tant esmeu,
Qu'ils pensent estre vray l'ondoyant qu'ils ont veu,
Ainsi tu penses vrais les vers dont je me joüe,
Qui te font enrager, & je les en avoüe.[57]
Ny tes vers ny les miens oracles ne sont pas,
Je prends tanseulement les Muses pour ébas,
En riant je compose, en riant je veux lire,
Et voyla tout le fruit que je recoy d'escrire,
Ceux qui font autrement, ils ne sçavent choisir
Les vers qui ne sont nés sinon pour le plaisir.
Et pour ce les grands Roys joignent à la Musique,
(Non au Conseil privé) le bel art Poëtique.

(XI, 162-163)

Taken at face value vv. 919, 922, and above all, v. 926, would leave an utterly untenable impression of Ronsard as a poet, of his view of the creative process, his concept of the end which poetry is thought to serve, and his opinion of the connection between ethics and aesthetics. A brief note (*verbum sapienti sat*) by Raymond Lebègue on v. 926 hints at the untenability of such a position: «*Delectare* disait Horace dans l'*Art poétique*; ici Ronsard passe sous silence l'autre terme: *prodesse.*»[58]

In the sixtieth sonnet of the *Amours* of 1552 (inc. *Pardonne moy, Platon...*), Ronsard rejected the theory of Plato, Aristotle, and Empedocles, who denied the existence of a vacuum. But Muret, in his 1553 *Commentaire* (p. 98), wisely refused to take Ronsard's rejection at face value: «L'auteur toutefois usant du privilege des poëtes, ausquels il a toujours esté libre d'afermer choses fausses, impugner choses vraies, ainsi que bon leur a semblé, pour mieus adapter le tout a leurs conceptions, faint ici ne pouvoir

[56] «A Sainct Mathurin de l'Archant, où l'on meine les fouz emmenotez et liez, pour y faire leurs Neuf jours...' (Cl. Garnier). Quant au mot 'avertineux', il vient de saint Avertin, qui passait, comme saint Mathurin, pour guérir les fous.» Note by Laumonier.

[57] «Je les approuve de te faire enrager.» Note by Laumonier.

[58] *L.*, XI, 194 (2e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*).

aprouver cette derniere opinion...» Throughout all of the collective editions, including the edition *ne varietur* of 1587, Ronsard retained Muret's comment without change, except orthographic, and thus demonstrated that his friend had correctly judged the poet's point of view with respect to the relationship of truth to poetry. A reading of the sonnet itself will show that Muret was justified in saying that Ronsard «faint ici ne pouvoir aprouver cette derniere opinion». The poet's intention was obviously not serious; his attitude toward the truth in general, and toward the manner in which it relates to beauty in poetry, is in no sense genuinely engaged by a momentary poetic license.

A decade after Muret's observation Ronsard will say, in a less facetious vein, that Dorat

> .. me montra comment
> On doit feindre & cacher les fables proprement,
> Et à bien deguiser la verité des choses
> D'un fabuleux manteau dont elles sont encloses...
> (XII, 50; cf. XII, 71, vv. 71-78)

Much later, in the last years of his life, Ronsard will immortalize poets who thus hide the truth under the «voile d'une fable» (XVIII, 96), for the veil might conceal an underlying meaning (ὑπόνοια), which frequently, even when clouded in obscurity, seemed to embody human experiences too precious to be sacrificed.[59] We shall never understand Ronsard's evaluation of the good, the true, and the beautiful, unless we seek the underlying intention of the passages, and not only the fabular ones, in which these values are seriously weighed. But we should be disappointed if we expected to find in his pages anything resembling a philosophic discussion of beauty, truth, and virtue.

Poetry, Ronsard says to Carnavalet, is superior to sculpture in conferring everlasting praise on men of virtue:

> C'est un travail de bon heur
> Chanter les hommes louables,
> Et leur bastir un honneur
> Seul vainqueur des ans muables.
> Le marbre, ou l'airain vétu
> D'un labeur vif par l'enclume,
> N'animent pas la vertu
> Comme je fai par ma plume:
> Ores donq' ta renommée
> Voira les cieus, animée
> Par le labeur de mes dois:
> Telle durable richesse
> Sur la Roialle largesse
> Heureuse estimer tu dois.
> (I, 92-93; cf. I, 87-88)

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[59] See *RGTP*, Chap. XI, sec. vii, «The Necessary Ambivalence of Fabular Truth», pp. 379-389.

Several Pindaric odes have been suggested as the models for this strophe, but perhaps the most satisfactory is the fourth Nemean for Timasarchus of Aegina, victorious in the boys' wrestling-match, who had requested an additional ode in honor of his deceased uncle Callicles: «We hear, Timasarchus, that thy clan is a minister unto songs of victory. But... thou wouldst have me build, in honour of Callicles... a monument whiter than the Parian stone, — for even as gold, when refined, is made to show all radiance, so doth song in honour of brave deeds make a man the peer of kings» (77-85).

In one of his odes to Du Bellay, after having eulogized distinguished members of Joachim's family, Ronsard turns to praise his colleague, for it is the function of the poet to praise his subject for his own virtues;

> Puis que sa louange foisonne
> En cent vertus propres à lui,
> A quoi par les honneurs d'autrui
> Rempli-je ce que je lui donne?
> Sa gloire sufit pour borner
> Les vers qui le veulent orner.
> O bons dieus on ne sçauroit faire
> Que la vertu se puisse taire
> Bien qu'on brule de l'obscurcir:
> Maugré l'envie el' se rend forte,
> Et sur le front la lampe porte
> Qui seule la peut eclarcir,
>
> (I, 116-117; cf. III, 30, vv. 411-418)

Here Ronsard has extracted the substance of several verses of the third Nemean from the setting of imagery in which it is found:«To what foreign foreland, O my soul, art thou turning aside the course of thy voyage?... Nor should any man prefer to foster passionate longings for what belongeth to others. Search at home, and thou hast won a fitting theme for praise, to prompt sweet melody» (26-32). Ronsard's confidence that with the aid of poetry virtue will triumph over envy is a reminiscence of the closing verses of the second Olympian: «But praise is attacked by envy... envy that is ever eager to babble and to darken the fair deeds of noble men...» (95-98).

Certain passages in the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital* are perhaps the nearest approach in Ronsard to a positive statement, introduced by a felicitous Pindaric image, of his conviction that the essence of his art is the creation of a web of musical strands of the Good and the True woven upon the strings of the lyre:[60]

> ANTISTROPHE [22]
>
> Ourdis, ô doulce Lyre mienne,
> Encor' un chant à cestui cy,

[60] See above, Chap. XVIII, sec. ix.

Qui met ta chorde Dorienne
Soubz le travail d'un doulx soucy.
Il n'y a ne torrent, ne roche,
Qui puisse engarder un sonneur,
Que pres du Bon il ne s'approche
Courant pour chanter son honneur.
Puisse-je autant darder cest hynne
Par l'air, d'un bras presumptueux,
Comme il est sage, & vertueux,
Et comme il est de mes vers digne.

EPODE [22]

Faisant parler sa grandeur
Aux sept langues de ma Lyre,
De luy je ne veux rien dire
Dont je puisse estre menteur:
Mais veritable, il me plaist
De chanter bien hault, qu'il est
L'ornement de nostre France,
Et qu'en fidele equité,
En justice, & verité,
Les vieux siecles il devance.

EPODE [23]

Je trahirois les vertuz,
Et les hommes revestuz
De vertueuses louanges,
Sans publier leur renom
Et sans envoyer leur nom
Jusques aux terres estranges.
(III, 159-161)

For these strophes, as Laumonier's notes make clear, Ronsard has taken generously from several of Pindar's odes, but for their central thought he has depended largely on his own understanding of the function of poetry as an instrument awakened to eulogy by the moral excellence and devotion to truth of the person addressed.[61] Verses 727-728 are virtually transposed from Nem., IV, 44-45:[62] «Weave out forthwith, sweet lyre, the web of lovely song...» Verses 731-738 are a significant adaptation of Isth., II, 33-37: «For 'tis no hill, no, nor is the path steep, if one bringeth the praises of the maids of Helicon to the homes of famous men. By a long throw may I fling my dart as far beyond all others, as Xenocrates surpassed all men in sweetness of temper.» The significance of the adaptation, for our present purpose, lies,

[61] A thought to which he will return in *Le Temple... des Chastillons*, VIII, 82, vv. 205-216.

[62] The first and second editions of *L.*, III, 159, n. 2, inadvertently give Nem., IX as the source; corrected in the second tirage (1968) prepared by Raymond Lebègue.

of course, in the substitution of «Bon» for εὐδόξων ἀνδρῶν, «famous (or glorious) men», a significance further deepened in the rest of the twenty-second epode by the emphasis on truth, that of l'Hospital, but also that of his poet. In verses 739-740 Ronsard, «music-weaver of the golden warps», assumes the role of the divinity of music in the fifth Nemean, 24-25: «... Apollo, sweeping with golden quill the seven-fold notes of the lyre,[63] led the various strains.»

Ronsard's attitude toward the relationship of the art of poetry to the values of virtue and truth may occasionally be better discerned in the intensity of his rejection of their contraries. Court poetry being what it is, a composition may sometimes be dictated by an immediate interest capable of setting the poet's expression at odds with his inward convictions. In spite of Ronsard's chronic lapses of commitment to ideals held and professed with genuine sincerity, his integrity as a poet and a man devoted to the immanent beauty of the Good and the True, emerged securely from the odious situations in which a courtier may become entangled against his will.

Those who know Ronsard will not hesitate, I think, to assign to the relatively few poems in which, against the overt or shrouded or inavowable pressures of the Court, his true feelings erupt, a weight more representative of his essential beliefs than to the scores of poems, commissioned or gratuitous, in which his task is that of *encenseur*. It is impossible, for example, not to sense the sincerity of Ronsard's assertions in a 1559 sonnet to Pierre Forget: that those who inhabit the Court «sont pipeurs, & pleins d'une foy vaine, Ne retenant sans plus de vertus que le nom» (X, 77); that bread baked upon ashes, water drunk from the hand, are sweeter than the ambrosia and nectar served at Court. It is impossible not to experience the moral beauty of the final malediction that Ronsard utters against his own art when it swerves from its ideal to wait upon an alien master: «Maudit est le mettier Qui nous acquiert du bien par une hypocrisie» (X, 78).

Ten years after the sonnet to Forget, Ronsard, residing far from the Court at Saint-Cosme, dedicated one of his most self-revealing poems, *La Salade*, to his companion and secretary Amadis Jamyn. As one reads the prelude, with its description of the gathering and washing of herbs, one is conscious of reliving with Ronsard a moment, in reality a period of several years, of unshadowed happiness, in spite of the fever which was sapping his energies. «Voilà, Jamyn», he says to his friend, referring to the way of life he had elected to follow, «voilà mon souv'rain bien.» He imagines Jamyn's reply and his own answer to it:

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[63] φόρμιγγ' ἑπτάγλωσσον, *lit.* seven-tongued lyre, as in Ronsard's «sept langues de ma Lyre».

Tu me diras que la fiebvre m'abuze,
Que je suis fol, ma salade & ma Muse:
Tu diras vray: je le veux estre aussy,
Telle fureur me guarist mon soucy.
(XV, 78)

Ronsard's meaning is evident. The Muse, the *furor poeticus*, is the healing power against anxieties more deeply troubling than the fever. The Muse is inseparable from the sovereign good as he conceives it. If his present happiness is without a shadow, the Muses, and no doubt Apollo Musagetes, the divinity both of music and the sun, have made that possible. He therefore repudiates a way of life «Aupres des Grands» and the deceptive happiness of pomp and circumstance it offers (vv. 41-46), for to succeed in that existence

Il faut mentir, flater, & courtizer,
Rire sans ris, sa face deguiser
Au front d'autruy, & je ne le veux faire,
Car telle vie à la mienne est contraire.
(*Ibid.*)

Contrary to the life that he would pursue because it would insinuate a principle of moral corrosion — Plutus expelling the Muses — inconsistent with the poetic ideal:

En peu de temps les Courtizans s'en vont
En chef grison, ou meurent sur un coffre.
Dieu pour salaire un tel present leur offre
D'avoir gasté leur gentil naturel
D'ambition & de bien temporel...
Loing de moy soit la faveur & la pompe,
Qui d'apparence, en se fardant, nous trompe,
Ains qui nous lime & nous ronge au dedans
D'ambition & de soucis mordans.
(XV, 79-80)

Having accumulated in his mind a considerable dossier of the fauna[64] of the Court, the national focus of flattery and deceit,[65] Ronsard needed no guidance from Pindar[66] or any other writer to arrive at a disabused judgment of the inhabitants of that glittering environment:

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[64] Loups, IX, 177-178, vv. 57, 68, 72; 192, v. 325; corbeaux, XVIII, 102, v. 140; 267, v. 51; 301, v. 28; harpies, XVIII, 100, v. 79; 303, v. 69.

[65] On this theme Ronsard was inexhaustible. See, for example, III, 31, vv. 430-436; V, 173, vv. 145-150 and v. 147, the variant of 1587; VIII, 291, vv. 707-712; 334, vv. 137-140; XIII, 129, vv. 1065-1068; 180, vv. 77-78; XVI, 319, vv. 1623-1624; XVII, 27, vv. 159-160; XVIII, 34, vv. 23-24; 40, vv. 75-76; 267, vv. 51-52. — It is perhaps worth noting as an indication of Ronsard's deepening disenchantment with the Court in his final years that the last three citations and the variant of the citation from vol. V are all from the editions of 1584 and 1587.

[66] Though he knew well the Theban's warning to Hieron (Pyth., II, 81-82) against deceitful, fawning citizens who lose all credit among men of character.

L'ambition, les soucis & l'envie,
Et tout cela qui meurdrist nostre vie,
Semblent des Dieux à tels hommes, qui n'ont
Ny foy au cœur, ny honte sur le front:
Telz hommes sont colosses inutiles,
Beaux par dehors, dedans pleins de chevilles,
Barres & clous, qui serrent ces grands corps:
En les voyant dorez par le dehors,
Un Jupiter, Appollon, ou Neptune,
Chacun revere & doute leur fortune:
Et toutefois tel ouvrage trompeur,
Par sa haulteur ne fait seulement peur
Qu'aux idiotz: mais l'homme qui est sage
Passant par là ne fait cas de l'ouvrage:
Ains en esprit il desdaigne ces Dieux,
Portraits de plastre, & luy fachent les yeux,
Subjets aux vents, au froid & à la poudre.[67]
(XV, 80-81)

To be able to write in this vein in 1569 Ronsard had been prepared by a quarter of a century of reflection on the nature of the poetic ideal. He was hardly more than an adolescent when he wrote in *A son Luc*:

La poësie est un feu consumant
Par grand ardeur l'esprit de son amant,
Esprit que jamais ne laisse
En repos tant elle presse.
Voila pourquoi le ministre des dieus
Vit sans grands biens, d'autant qu'il aime mieus
Abonder d'inventions
Que de grands possessions.
(II, 158)

And this vow to his lyre:

Tes nettes & saintes cordes
Ne seront par moi polues
De chansons salles & ordes
D'un tas d'amours dissolues...
(II, 156)

a vow no doubt earnestly intended and generally redeemed, but observed so often in the breach that Laumonier, thinking of the *Livret de folastries* and other compositions of the same tendency, was compelled to say, tongue in cheek, «Ronsard n'a pas toujours tenu sa promesse» (II, 156, n. 2).

The words of the grown man, however, who had lived through the rather wild moments of his incursion into the poetic scene in 1550, may be taken almost as an assertion of faith. In the ode to Michel de l'Hospital the Muses,

[67] «La poussière.» Note by Laumonier.

in full awareness of the cosmic bond that unites the two petitions in their prayer to Zeus, ask for the double grace of spurning «l'Enfer odieux», and of understanding the movements of the stars (III, 139). In granting the prayer of his daughters Zeus tells them that as swiftly as the lightning bolt leaves his hand, the *furor poeticus* enters the human heart,

> Pourveu qu'il soit preparé,
> Pur de vice, & reparé
> De la vertu precieuse.
> (III, 143; cf. pp. 144-145, 148-149)

The *Hymne de la Mort* (1555) begins with a lament that the poets of antiquity — Hesiod, Homer, and «mille autres Grecz», led by «leur mere Vertu» (VIII, 163), have left modern writers very little to say. To the Predican's accusation that he leads a lascivious life Ronsard replies by a description of his activities during a normal day, a description that emphasizes the intimate relationship between poetry and virtue. After he has said his morning prayers,

> ... je sors du lict, & quant je suis vestu
> Je me renge à l'estude, & aprens la vertu,
> Comparant[68] & lisant, suyvant ma Destinée,
> Qui s'est des mon enfance aux Muses enclinée...
> (XI, 144; cf. XII, 47, vv. 25-26)

The prelude of the *Hymne de l'Hyver* (1563) presents a curious instance, at first blush ambiguous, but quite revealing if carefully examined, of Ronsard's deep understanding of the kinship of ethics and aesthetics.

The ethical climax of Hesiod's *Works and Days* may perhaps be said to lie in the passage on the difficulty of attaining virtue (ἀρετή): «To you, foolish Perses,[69] I will speak good sense. Badness can be got easily and in shoals: the road to her is smooth, and she lives very near us. But between us and Goodness the gods have placed the sweat of our brows: long and steep is the path that leads to her, and it is rough at the first; but when a man has reached the top, then indeed she is easy, though otherwise hard to reach» (*WD*, 286-292).

The substance of these lines entered permanently and intimately into Ronsard's thought. The six or seven passages which have been plainly influenced by Hesiod's description of virtue are about equally divided between

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[68] The significant variant in the 1584 edition (p. 906, col. 1, last line), wanting in *L.*, XI (1946), is *composant*. See Jean Baillou's edition of the *Discours des Misères*, p. 152, v. 487, and R. Lebègue in *L.*,XI, p. 189 (2e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*), and *L.*, XIX, p. 138.

[69] Hesiod's brother who, by bribing the authorities, had obtained more than his share of their father's estate.

poems addressed to members of the Church and to fellow-writers.[70] This reflects an accurate sense of the two-fold meaning of ἀρετή: ethical virtue and excellence. But it is not always easy to know in which sense Ronsard is using the term *vertu*.

All ambiguity of intention seems to have disappeared, one would think, from the opening verses of the *Hymne de l'Hyver*, in which the laurel of poetic, rather than ethical, attainment has apparently become the sole object of the poet's exertion:

Je ne veux couronner mes cheveux ny mon front
D'un Laurier qui croistra sur la cyme d'un mont:[71]
Je veux l'aller chercher sur le haut d'une roche
Difficile à grimper, où personne n'aproche:
Je veux avecq' travail brusquement y monter,
M'esgraphinant les mains avant que l'apporter,
Pour le monstrer au peuple, & avant que je chante
Quelle propriété se trouve en cette plante.
Peuple, ce verd Laurier pour qui j'ay combatu
(Diray-je en le montrant) est de grande vertu.
Si quelqu'un le regarde, ou le masche, ou le pose
Pour couronne à son chef, tout soudain il compose,
Et les Muses, qui sont noble race du Ciel,
Arrousent sa parolle & sa bouche de miel.
Il est soudain aymé des seigneurs & des Princes,
Il marche venerable au milieu des provinces,
Il est de tous costés d'un peuple environné,
Il a le front de gloire & d'honneur couronné...
Philosophe hardy, constant de toutes pars,
Armé de sa vertu comme de grands rampars.
(XII, 68-69)

To read the first fourteen lines of this passage one would suppose that for Ronsard the term *vertu* retained only an aesthetic connotation, and this supposition would be strongly confirmed by a verse that will enter many years later into the immediately ensuing context (v. 17, variant of 1587): «Il rend

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[70] They were studied in *RGE*, pp. 341-346.

[71] In 1578 Ronsard saw that the first two verses were in contradiction with the thought he wished to express. In three successive changes he attained their definitive form in the edition of 1587:

Je ne veux sur mon front la couronne attacher
D'un Laurier de jardins trop facile à chercher...
(*S.*, VI, 183)

On the original form of these verses Laumonier correctly observed, XII, 68, n. 2: «Imité de Properce, IV, 10, 3:

Magnum iter ascendo, sed dat mihi gloria vires:
Non juvat e facili lecta corona jugo.»

But a comparison of Ronsard's lines with those of Hesiod will show that we are dealing here with a case of contamination of the Greek and Latin texts. Any doubt of the presence of Hesiod ought to be removed by Ronsard's two references to *vertu* (ἀρετή) in vv. 10 and 26.

par son bel art son païs estonné.» One might be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that Ronsard had filled the expression ἀρετή with a content analogous to the doctrine of art for art's sake. Such a conclusion would ignore the genuine similarities between the characters of Hesiod and Ronsard.[72] The frequency with which he employs this bit of Hesiodic morality on the difficulty of achieving ἀρετή is in itself a rather clear indication of a more than aesthetic interest. In reality, Ronsard here asserts the fundamental affinity between Hesiod's essentially ethical doctrine of labor and his own instincts as a craftsman in poetry. The good which is the end of labor in Hesiod's vision of man and society, and the beautiful which emerges from the thought of the craftsman, Ronsard, are equally ἀρεταί, equally excellent ethically and aesthetically, and equally difficult of attainment. The Muses, who are of a noble and celestial race, confer upon the works of the poet, created with infinite toil, their outer and inner beauty — the freshness of dew and the savor of honey. The poet's forehead is crowned not alone with laurel, but with honor and glory, and he is revered by prince and people alike. This is Ronsard's way of saying that an ethical power is immanent in the aesthetic virtue symbolized by the laurel, and that it is in the Muses that this equivalence of the good and the beautiful finds its affective and rational dwelling. Thus Ronsard in no sense belies his conviction, at once Pindaric and Platonic, of an indissoluble relationship between the good and the beautiful. On the contrary, he confirms it in its innermost meaning when he concludes the passage on the conquest of poetic virtue with an ethical description of the poet (vv. 25-26) whose courage, whose *vertu*, sufficed for so great an undertaking.

For a clear statement of Ronsard's theory one would naturally look to his *Art poëtique* and one would not be disappointed. It is, in fact, his first concern to make his conviction unmistakably manifest in words that express a deep-rooted faith in the affinity of poetry and ethics, a faith against which time and the solicitations of society will ultimately be powerless. «Sur toutes choses», Ronsard telles his disciple, «tu auras les Muses en revérence, voire en singuliere veneration, & ne les feras jamais servir à choses deshonnestes, à risées, ny à libelles injurieux, mais les tiendras cheres & sacrées, comme les filles de Juppiter, c'est à dire de Dieu, qui de sa saincte grace a premierement par elles faict cognoistre aux peuples ignorans les excellences de sa majesté» (XIV, 4). And on the following page: «Or, pour ce que les Muses ne veulent loger en une ame, si elle n'est bonne, saincte, & vertueuse, tu seras de bonne nature, non meschant, renfrongné, ne chagrin: mais animé d'un gentil esprit, ne laisseras rien entrer en ton entendement qui ne soit sur-humain & divin» (XIV, 5; cf. III, 214, vv. 585-588).

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[72] See *RGE*, p. 307.

In the *Discours ou Dialogue entre les Muses deslogées & Ronsard* (1584) it is the Muses themselves who briefly enumerate the principal aspects of their mission among men. Their words are an epitome of the ideals that guided Ronsard in situations far from ideal and frequently beyond his power to control:

Nostre mestier estoit d'honorer les grands Rois,
De rendre venerable & le peuple & les lois,
Faire que la vertu du monde fust aimée,
Et forcer le trespas par longue renommée:
D'une flame divine allumer les esprits,
Avoir d'un cueur hautain le vulgaire à mespris,
Ne priser que l'honneur & la gloire cherchée,
Et tousjours dans le ciel avoir l'ame attachée.
(XVIII, 91)

There is hardly a word in these lines that Pindar would have disavowed. In v. 69 he would surely have recognized the great theme of the first Pythian ode, just as he would have seen in the words «flame divine» the αἴγλα διόσδοτος a «radiance given by Zeus», that casts a celestial light upon the conclusion of Pythian VIII.

In the final chapter of his *Histoire de la Pléiade* Henri Chamard gave his definitive judgment of the contribution of Ronsard and his colleagues to French poetry: «Ainsi, pour Ronsard, le poète, gratifié par Dieu du génie, devient de par cette élection son interprète auprès des hommes. Il est l'objet d'une mission privilégiée qui lui vaut l'honneur et la gloire, mais dont il ne peut s'acquitter de façon totale et parfaite que s'il nourrit en soi des sentiments à la hauteur de son génie, et qu'il se révèle à tous aussi vertueux qu'inspiré... Religieuse dans son principe, morale dans son action, artistique dans sa forme, la poésie n'a rien qui la confonde avec ce jeu subtil de mètres et de rimes qu'on appelle versification... Telle est la noble conception... que la Pléiade apportait à la France. C'était celle du *vates* antique, interprète des Dieux... chargé d'une mission spéciale, — la mission de garder, d'entretenir, de propager les grandes idées éternelles qui sont, à travers tous les siècles, le soutien de la race humaine» (IV, 152-156).

VIII. «All the beings that Zeus hath not loved»

Of these beings the first Pythian mentions by name only Typhon, monstrous offspring of Gaia (Earth) and Tartarus, according to Hesiod's narrative (*Theogony*, 821-822), who thus describes this creature of surpassing evil: «From his shoulders grew an hundred heads of a snake, a fearful dragon, with dark, flickering tongues, and from under the brows of his eyes in his marvellous heads flashed fire, and fire burned from his heads as he glared.

And there were voices in all his dreadful heads which uttered every kind of sound unspeakable... so that the high mountains re-echoed. And truly a thing past help would have happened on that day, and he would have come to reign over mortals and immortals, had not the father of men and gods been quick to perceive it... So when Zeus had raised up his might and seized his arms, thunder and lightning and lurid thunderbolt, he leaped from Olympus and struck him, and burned all the marvellous heads of the monster about him... And in the bitternes of his anger Zeus cast him into wide Tartarus» (Evelyn-White, pp. 139-143).

Pindar had chosen Typhon as most representative of «all the beings that Zeus hath not loved» (Pyth., I, 13), beings who had at various times risen against the rule of the heavenly dynasty. The poet of Thebes, unlike Hesiod, did not dwell on the details of the struggle between Zeus and Typhon, but rather on the punishment meted out to one who had presumed to subvert the harmonious order of the universe: «The steep shores above Cyme, and Sicily too, lie heavy on his shaggy breast, and the column that soareth to heaven crusheth him, even snow-clad Etna... from whose inmost caves burst forth the purest founts of unapproachable fire, and, in the day-time, her rivers roll a lurid stream of smoke, while amid the gloom of night, the ruddy flame, as it sweepeth along, with crashing din whirleth rocks to the deep sea far below. And that monster flingeth aloft the most fearful founts of fire... such a being is he that lieth bound... while all his out-stretched back is goaded by his craggy couch» (Pyth., I, 18-28).

Typhon and the rebellious Giants and Titans were all descended from the same divine mother, Gaia. Tantalus and Ixion, they too born of divine parentage, are also counted among the great malefactors of Greek mythology, though their presumption, which earned them the animosity of the gods, cannot be measured, like Typhon's, on a cosmic scale. Compared to Typhon and the Giants and Titans, they are human both in their persons and in their transgressions.

The fundamental premises of Greek ethics, measured according to a human criterion, emerge in Pindar's comments on the iniquitous actions of Tantalus and Ixion. «If indeed there was any mortal man who was honoured by the guardian-gods of Olympus, that man was Tantalus; but, alas! he could not brook his great prosperity [ὄλβον], and, owing to his surfeit [χόρῳ] of good things, he gat himself an overpowering curse [ἄταν], which the Father hung over him in the semblance of a monstrous stone, which he is ever eager to thrust away from his head, thus wandering from the ways of joy. And thereby hath he a helpless life of never-ending labour... because he stole from the gods the nectar and ambrosia, with which they had made him immortal» (Ol., I, 54-64). «Men tell us that Ixion, as he whirleth round and

round on his winged wheel, by the behests of the gods, teacheth this lesson: — men should requite the benefactor with fresh tokens of warm gratitude. He learnt that lesson only too well; for though he received the boon of a happy life among the gracious children of Cronus, he could not be content with his great prosperity [ὄλβον], what time with madness of spirit he became enamoured of Hera, the allotted partner of the wedded joys of Zeus. But his insolence [ὕβρις] drove him into overweening infatuation [ἀυάταν], and soon did the man, suffering what was fit, meet with a wondrous doom» (Pyth., II, 21-30).

In these passages, Gildersleeve says (p. xxxi), «we find a genealogy which was as popular with the Greeks as Sin and Death in the Christian system. Ὄλβος — Κόρος — Ὕβρις — Ἄτη.[73] The prosperity that produces pride and fulness of bread culminates in overweening insolence and outrage and brings on itself mischief sent from heaven. That is not Pindar, any more than it is Solon, than it is Theognis, Aischylos».

If the lyre in the first Pythian is the symbol of cosmic harmony and of «civilization as the world's music» (Norwood, pp. 104-105), Typhon symbolizes cosmic discord in the universe and moral cacophony on earth.

In his ode of 1550, *A sa lire* (inc. *Lire dorée, où Phebus seulement*), Ronsard had understood both symbols, but had been far more attentive to the first. The two initial strophes, in close correspondence with the prelude of Pindar's ode, develop images of world concord and serenity. The principle that sets the gods in opposition to the universal anarchy represented by Typhon is briefly and well formulated in the first two verses of the third strophe addressed to the lyre:

> Celui n'est pas le bien aimé des Dieus
> A qui deplaist ton chant melodieus...
> (I, 163)

The depth of the impression that this Pindaric thought made on Ronsard may be measured by its recurrence in at least three of his later poems.[74] But the name, the person, and the punishment of Typhon are completely absent from Ronsard's ode, which is essentially a proud assertion of his priority and superiority as a lyric poet in France, who sings «des grans Rois les honneurs & les gloires» (v. 36).

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[73] The same genealogy is given by Mair, *art. cit.*, (above, n. 55), p. 554, col. 2, and its Hellenic sources in Homer, p. 549, col. 2; in Hesiod, p. 552, col. 2; in Solon and Theognis, p. 553, col. 2.

[74] XI, 161, vv. 897-898; XV, 128, vv. 141-142; XVIII, 91, vv. 67-69. — There may be an anticipation of this in II, 161, vv. 113-114, antedating Ronsard's interest in Pindar.

We must wait until 1555, date of the *Hymne du treschrestien Roy de France Henry II. de ce nom*, for Ronsard to attempt, however timidly, to reproduce some of the tremendous effects created by Pindar in his description of the punishment of Typhon.[75] But just as in *A sa lire* the themes of cosmic harmony and dissonance were deflected to serve personal and courtly ends, so in the hymn to Henri II the themes are courtly and personal:

> ... car moy qui sçay tresbien
> Comme on chante les Roys, je veux chanter du mien
> L'honneur & les vertus...
> «L'honneur est le seul prix que demandent les Dieux:
> Et Jupiter, apres la sanglante victoire
> Des Geans, ne voulut recevoir autre gloire
> Sinon d'oüir sonner à son filz Apollon
> Comme son trait armé d'un flambant tourbillon
> D'esclatz, de bruit, de peur, de soufre, & de tonnerre,
> Avoit écarbouillé leur cerveau contre terre
> Tombés à bas du Ciel, & comme leurs grands corps,
> Avecque leurs cent bras, estoient renversés mortz
> Sous les monts qu'ilz portoient, & comme pour trophée
> De sa victoire, Æthna flamboya sur Typhée.[76]
>
> (VIII, 6-7; cf. VI, 88; IX, 54)

The crime and punishment of Tantalus are narrated by Pindar only in the passage quoted above from the first Olympian ode. There is also a brief, but for every Hellenic contemporary of Pindar, a deeply significant reference in the eighth Isthmian to the removal of «the stone of Tantalus above our head» (9-10) after the victories of Salamis and Plataea. Since this bore no relation to any compelling interest of Ronsard, its absence from his poetry evokes no surprise. The myth recounted in the first Olympian, however, has a general moral value applicable to a variety of human situations. Nevertheless, in more than a score of allusions to Tantalus, Ronsard seems not to have sensed sufficient importance in the meaning of the Pindaric version of the myth to wish to introduce it into his own compositions. Often the miseries that Tantalus endured merely become stereotypes for the erotic sufferings of the poet or of those on whose behalf he was writing.[77]

Perhaps Ronsard's deepest understanding of the symbolism of the myths of Tantalus and other sinners of Greek legend may be found in the elegy to Robert de la Haye (1560). The poet imagines what his reply might be if Fate

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[75] An analogous passage in the ode to M. de l'Hospital (III, 135-136) is Hesiodic.

[76] The references to Apollo performing the hymn of victory in the presence of Zeus (vv. 19-21), and to Aetna in eruption over the prostrate body of Typhon (v. 28) point to the first Pythian as a possible contributing source of this passage. Neither allusion is found in the *Theogony*, 820-885, where the defeat of Typhon by Zeus is described.

[77] See IV, 50; V, 111; VI, 148; VII, 168; XV, 87, etc.

were to offer him the possibility of reincarnation in some animal form. — Bird, fish, stag, he answers, anything but man:

De tous les animaux le plus lourd animal,
C'est l'homme, le subject d'infortune & de mal,
Qui endure en vivant la peine que Tantale
Là bas endure mort dedans l'onde infernalle,
Et celle de Sisyphe, & celle d'Ixion:
Il porte son enfer, ou par ambition,
Ou par crainte de mort qui toujours le tourmente,
Et plus un mal finit & plus l'autre s'augmente.
(X, 316-317; cf. VIII, 99-100; XI, 122-123)

A 1578 variant of v. 36 that might easily be overlooked reveals that Ronsard's sensitivity to the symbolism of the punishments of these iniquitous mortals had become, thanks to a reading of Lucretius,[78] psychologically more discerning with the passing years. Tantalus, Ixion, Sisyphus endure their anguish after death in Hades, but on earth man is more miserable than they: «Vif son enfer il porte.»

The words seem to announce the torments of the terrible fourth sonnet of the *Derniers vers*, in which the physical sufferings reveal, more than they hide, the miseries of the spirit:

Ah longues nuicts d'hyver de ma vie bourrelles,
Donnez moy patience, & me laissez dormir,
Vostre nom seulement, & suer & fremir
Me fait par tout le corps, tant vous m'estes cruelles.

Le sommeil tant soit peu n'esvente de ses ailes
Mes yeux tousjours ouvers, & ne puis affermir
Paupiere sur paupiere, & ne fais que gemir,
Souffrant comme Ixion des peines eternelles.

Vieille umbre de la terre,[79] ainçois l'umbre d'enfer,
Tu m'as ouvert les yeux d'une chaisne de fer,
Me consumant au lict, navré de mille pointes:

Pour chasser mes douleurs ameine moy la mort,
Ha mort, le port commun, des hommes le confort,
Viens enterrer mes maux je t'en prie à mains jointes.
(XVIII, 179)

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[78] *De Rerum Natura*, III, 978 ff.; so Laumonier, X, 317, n. 1.

[79] «'La nuict est l'ombre de la terre' (M. de la Porte, *Epithetes*).» Note by Raymond Lebègue. — It has seemed futile to multiply references to the numerous passages in which the name of Ixion occurs in Ronsard. Far more often than not it is found in conjunction with that of Tantalus, or like that of Tantalus, is present in stock verses on the poet's amatory tribulations.

«The genius that stamps these commonplaces [passages on the prosperity that issues in pride and insolence] into artistic form, that gives to the wisdom of the many the wit of the one, and makes the doctrine a proverb, this was Pindar's, and Pindar's was the believing soul that breathed into the dead dogma the breath of a living and working faith; and we call that man great who thinks and utters the people's thought best» (Gildersleeve, p. xxxi).

The dogma was not, of course, dead, and the commonplaces were not unthinkingly dispensed without consideration of the circumstances and individuals to whom they were addressed. The dogma was a living principle in whose light the transgressions of a Tantalus, an Ixion, a Porphyrion, were judged. The crimes of these legendary figures and the punishments allotted to them were not less genuine to the Greek poet and his audience for being exemplary. The same principle applied to the living recipient of Pindar's odes — to the athletes and even to the tyrants whose victories he celebrated.

«Toute la morale de Pindare», says Croiset (p. 230), «est dominée par un principe essentiel qu'il a exprimé de vingt façons différentes. Ce principe est le suivant: l'homme doit agir en toutes choses avec une exacte connaissance de sa médiocrité naturelle;[80] il doit par conséquent se tenir à sa place dans les bornes qui lui sont fixées, sans franchir les limites imposées par le destin à son activité légitime.[81] Malheur à qui méconnaît sa propre faiblesse! Celui qui veut s'élever au-dessus de la condition humaine, celui que les excès de l'orgueil... ont rempli de leur enivrement funeste... celui-là viole la loi fondamentale de sa nature; il attire sur lui la haine des hommes et celle des dieux... la calamité inévitable... et se perd par sa folie...»[82]

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[80] «La mediocrité fait la personne heureuse», says Ronsard (V, 91) in his translation of an epigram of Palladas; see W.R. Paton, ed. and tr., *The Greek Anthology* (London, Cambridge, Mass., IV [1956], 28-29). Ronsard's translation is preceded in 1553 by a modified version of the Greek text of v. 85 of Pindar's first Pythian. — On «mediocrité» cf. *L.*, VIII, 345, v. 425; X, 15, v. 222; XVIII, 101, v. 109, and my article on «Ronsard's Ethical Thought», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), 105-107.

[81] If a man's sense of the pre-eminence of the gods and of his own powerlessness is genuine and sincere, «so wird sie nicht todt und unfruchtbar bleiben, sondern den ganzen Menschen lebendig durchdringen und seiner praktischen Lebensrichtung ein ihr entsprechendes Gepräge verleihen; sie wird in dem Menschen stets das Gefühl seiner Schwäche und Beschränktheit rege erhalten und ihm die sittliche Pflicht auferlegen, bei allem Thun Mass zu beobachten und die dem Sterblichen gezogenen Schranken nicht zu überschreiten...» E. Buchholz, *op. cit.* (above, n. 5), p. 86.

[82] Cf. Max Wundt, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3), I, 117; F. Wehrli, *op. cit* (above, n. 3), pp. 78-82, «Warnung vor Übermass».

How steadfastly Pindar held to this principle from his first triumphal ode in 498 B.C. to the last in 446 may be judged from a number of the more relevant passages.[83]

In the tenth Pythian (498 B.C.) he congratulates a father who had been several times victorious in the Olympic games and whose son has recently won two Pythian contests, but in the same breath he counsels moderation in joy — «the brazen heaven he cannot climb» (27). He reminds a winner in the pancratium (Isth., V), that his valor was given to him by the gods; therefore «Strive not to be a Zeus... Mortal aims befit mortal men» (14-16).[84] In 476 the first Olympian ode to Hieron, who had attained the supreme summit of monarchy, concludes with the warning «Refrain from peering too far!» (114).[85] The eleventh Nemean (446?) reminds the athlete in the moment of victory «that the limbs he is robing are mortal, and that, in the end of all, he will be clad in a vesture of clay» (15-16).

Pindar, having passed the age of three score and ten, begins the last of the triumphal odes, the eighth Pythian (446) with an apostrophe to the «Kindly Goddess of Peace», and prays to Apollo, the Delphic divinity of music and the lyre, «O king, with assenting mind may I pay heed to harmony with thee in every step of my song» (67-69). For success in the creation of a work of beauty, not less than victory in the arena, «doth not depend on men alone; but he that giveth is God, who, at one while, exalteth on high, and, at another, bringeth one below the level of his hands» (76-78).

These are the Hellenic admonitions that Pindar reiterated at every significant juncture. What Croiset says (p. 281) of the four Hieronic poems is often true of many of the others: «Il est extrêmement remarquable que tous, malgré leurs différences, ramènent sans cesse l'esprit du lecteur à la même vérité morale, à ce grand précepte de sagesse, de modération, de prudence, que l'expérience populaire condensait sous cette forme, μηδὲν ἄγαν [nothing too much]. Récits mythiques et conseils directs, tout, dans ces quatre poèmes à travers les plus brillants détails, va au même but.» That goal is a deepened understanding of the human condition, of the abyss that separates mankind from the gods, for «the one is naught, while for the other the brazen heaven endureth as an abode unshaken for evermore» (Nem., VI, 3-4).

«Il y avait déjà bien longtemps...», Croiset says elsewhere (p. 242), «que la sagesse pratique de la Grèce avait prononcé son célèbre μηδὲν ἄγαν. Pin-

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[83] In the following paragraphs both the relatively certain and the conjectural dates are those given by C.M. Bowra in *Pindar*, p. 413.

[84] Cf. Ol., V (448 B.C.), the admonition that concludes the ode (of disputed authenticity) for Psaumis of Camarina: «Let him not seek to become a god», an aphorism which, says Farnell, II, 137, «marks Pindar's whole theory of life».

[85] Cf. Ol., XIII, 47-48; Isth., VII, 43-47.

dare, qui répète ce mot après bien d'autres, avoue expressément qu'il suit en cela l'exemple des sages. Il aurait pu dire qu'il suivait aussi *l'ordre même des dieux* [my emphasis]: car la célèbre devise du temple de Delphes (γνῶθι σεαυτόν) ne disait pas autre chose: 'Connais-toi toi-même', c'est-à-dire, dans le langage théologique (et non psychologique) de l'ancienne Grèce: 'Connais, ô homme, ta faiblesse naturelle, et les bornes étroites imposées par les dieux à ton ambition; ne vise pas plus haut que ta condition ne t'y autorise, si tu veux éviter les catastrophes irréparables amenées par la haine des dieux'.» This is essentially the counsel that Pindar gave to Hieron in the enigmatic second Pythian in words that echo the Delphic inscription: γένοι' οἷος ἐσσὶ μαθών, «Find, and be, yourself» (72).[86]

In this ode Pindar was addressing one of the most powerful rulers of Greece. His admonition possessed a gravity commensurate with the maturity and authority of the person for whom it was intended. When Ronsard in the *Institution de l'adolescence du Roy treschrestien Charles neufviesme* (1562) directed similar advice to a monarch, the *destinataire* was a young boy of eleven still under the tutelage of the Queen Mother, Catherine de Médicis:

> Le vray commencement pour en vertus acroistre,
> C'est (disoit Apollon) soymesme se cognoistre.
> Celuy qui se cognoist, est seul maistre de soy,
> Et sans avoir Royaume il est vrayement un Roy.
> (XI, 8)

There is no evidence here that Ronsard had in mind either the language or the significance of Pindar's advice to Hieron. The same is true of an earlier passage in the *Hymne de la Philosophie* (1555) dedicated to Odet Cardinal de Chastillon. When he says to the Cardinal:

> Toy, mon PRELAT, qui as l'intelligence
> De la Vertu, par longue experience...
> Qui te congnois, & qui, roy, te commandes...
> (VIII, 101)

it seems certain that his words convey only the superficially apparent meaning of the Delphic inscription, rather than its underlying warning not to overstep the limits enjoined on mortals by the gods. These verses, like those for Charles IX, are written in what Croiset would have described as psychological, not theological, language. The expressions «seul maistre de soy» and «qui, roy, te commandes» make this sufficiently clear.

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[86] This is Bowra's translation in *Pindar*, pp. 136 and 226. Sandys, p. 179, has: «Be true to thyself, now that thou hast learnt what manner of man thou art.» Finley, p. 96: «Learn what kind of man you are and become it.» Méautis, p. 164: «Deviens ce que tu es par l'expérience.» Puech, II, 45-46: «Sois tel que tu as appris à te connaître.»

The same is unquestionably true of Ronsard's first airy and lighthearted translation of this epigram by Palladas which appeared quite appropriately in the *Livret de folastries* of 1553: «Tell me whence comes it that thou measurest the Universe and the limits of the Earth, thou who bearest a little body made of a little earth. Measure thyself first and know thyself, and then shalt thou measure this infinite Earth. And if thou canst not reckon thy body's little store of clay, how canst thou know the measures of the immeasurable?»[87] Ronsard's first version had a carefree ring:

Aiant un petit cors vestu
D'un si petit monceau de terre,
Di moy, pourquoy mesures tu
Tout ce monde qui nous enserre?
Mesure toy premierement
Et te conoy & te commande,
Et puis mesure entierement
Le ciel & la terre si grande.
Si mesurer tu n'as pouvoir
De ton corps la fangeuse ordure,
Comment pourras tu bien sçavoir
De ce grand monde la mesure?
(V, 86)

The poet retained this epigram throughout all of the later editions including the first posthumous one of 1587, but its itinerary and successive stations seem to grow increasingly significant, especially toward the end of its journey, when it became a very near neighbor of the *Epitaphe de Niobé* (1584). A gay epigram from the *Livret de folastries*, deliberately moved into proximity with a particularly tragic epitaph, cannot fail to arouse wonder, and might dispose one to accept Laumonier's assertion that some of the final reclassifications of Ronsard's poems were «si peu judicieuses que nous nous refusons à croire qu'elles ont été faites 'selon l'intention' du poète» (*Vie*, p. 237).

We shall not follow the movement of Ronsard's epigram through the various editions,[88] except to say that as he began to see a value in the little poem that he had originally overlooked, it passed from its relatively indifferent place as eleventh among the 17 epigrams of the *Folastries* to the final position among the *Poëmes* of the collective edition of 1578,[89] and then to the same position at the end of the *Gayetez & Epigrammes*[90] in 1584 and 1587

[87] W.R. Paton (above, n. 80), vol. IV, 233.

[88] See *RGTP*, pp. 303-306.

[89] H. Vaganay, *Œuvres de Ronsard*, texte de 1578, IV, 287-288.

[90] On the significance, as Ronsard understood it, of the word *epigramme* as a *sepulchral inscription, an epitaph*, see *RGTP*, pp. 302-303.

(*LL.*, II, 60; *S.*, II, 417). Not until the last months of his life in 1585, when he was preparing the edition *ne varietur* that bears the date of 1587, did Ronsard see that by a few relatively slight revisions he might greatly intensify the admonitory force that the epigram of Palladas had already acquired by its thoughtful placement at the end of the *Gayetez & Epigrammes*. It was then that the poem assumed its definitive form:

Geometre qui as vestu
Un corps fait d'une fresle terre,
Pourquoy trompeur mesures-tu
Tous ce Monde qui nous enserre?
Mesure toy premierement
Et te cognois & te commande,
Et puis mesure entierement
Le ciel & la terre si grande.
Si homme tu n'as le pouvoir
De te cognoistre & ta nature,
Comment pourras-tu bien sçavoir
De ce grand Monde la nature?
(*S.*, II, 417)

In this version, and especially in the last four verses, one can, I believe, detect an understanding of the characteristically Hellenic theological interpretation of the Delphic γνῶθι σεαυτόν that underlies the epigram of Palladas and is plainly manifest in Pindar's counsel to Hieron, «Find, and be, yourself». The caution that is audible in «Si homme tu n'as le pouvoir De te cognoistre & ta nature», is substantially identical with Croiset's paraphrase of the Delphic admonition: «Connais, ô homme... les bornes étroites imposées par les dieux à ton ambition...»

In these months of 1585 Ronsard realized that because of its significance the ideal position of the *Epitaphe de Niobé* would be at the end of the *Gayetez & Epigrammes*. But this place was already pre-empted by the epigram of Palladas. Ronsard was faced with a choice: To which of the two was he to assign the final position in the section? The decision was more important, philosophically, morally, and aesthetically, than appears on the surface, for, as a glance at the *Sommaires* of 1584 (*LL.*, I, p. iv) and 1587 (*S.*, I, 43) will show, with the dispersal of the elements forming the section of *La Charite* between the editions of 1584 and 1587, the poem chosen to stand at the end of the *Gayetez & Epigrammes* would *ipso facto* receive the most significant place at the end of the first volume of the new edition. To understand the nature of the choice one must know the text of the Niobe quatrain:

Entreparleurs,
Niobe, & le Passant.
Niob.
Je vivois: un rocher Praxitele m'a faite.
Le P. Pourquoy sa main, qui fut d'animer si parfaite

Ne t'a l'ame & l'esprit en ce rocher laissé?
Niob. Je les perdy tous deux quand les Dieux j'offensé.
(*S.*, II, 418)

When the true meaning of the choice with which he was presented became clear, Ronsard could not have hesitated. Like Pindar, for whom «Honor the gods», was the first commandment of the Greek Decalogue, he would, I think, have found it in every way inadmissible to give to the injuction «Revere the gods», implicit in the tragedy and in the words of Niobe, a place that was symbolically inferior to the admonition «Know thyself». To have done so would have been to invert the relationship between the human and the divine. Ronsard's rejection of what would have been an essentially shallow solution revealed his understanding that γνῶθι σεαυτόν was indeed «l'ordre même des dieux» — not to transgress the boundaries of the human condition.[91]

[91] The second commandment of the Pindaric Decalogue, says Croiset (p. 232), «est d'honorer ses parents». The theme is developed in the sixth Pythian, at first in the words spoken by Chiron to the young Achilles: «First of all the gods adore the son of Cronus... and of such reverence never deprive thy parents during their allotted life» (23-27); and again in the account of Antilochus' sacrifice of his life for his father, Nestor, who was on the point of being slain by Memnon: «The god-like son bought with his own life the rescue of his father and... was deemed... to have proved himself... supreme in filial devotion» (38-42). — The name and the myth of Antilochus do not occur in Ronsard, who owed relatively little to the sixth Pythian — For the filial piety toward François Ier with which Ronsard credited Henri II, see VIII, 21 and n. 2. — The passage in the *Institution pour l'adolescence... de Charles IX*, in which Ronsard urges the boy-king to fear the Lord and to honor his mother (XI, 6-7; cf. XIII, 127), was inspired by the Biblical Decalogue. — Similar advice in the form of a «paraphrase du Décalogue» (VI, 41, n. 3; cf. VIII, 70, vv. 501-503) was given to Ronsard himself in a dream by the spirit of his deceased father (VI, 40-43). Ronsard's mother is mentioned briefly in this *Prosopopée de Louis de Ronsard son pere* (p. 43, v. 55), but she disappears from the editions of 1584 and 1587.

CHAPTER XXII

ETHICS IN PINDAR AND RONSARD: TERRESTRIAL BONDS, CELESTIAL AFFINITIES (II)

I. Preludes and Postludes of the «scène de la médisance»: «Tales are a dainty morsel to the envious»

In the last analysis, a true understanding of the boundaries of the human condition implies inward assent to the law of moderation that must govern man's conduct, in a limitless variety of ethical situations, in relation to himself, his fellow man, and the divine. If it is true that «No man is an Island, entire of itself», each of his actions or failures to act, even those which apparently involve none but himself, is woven into a resonant web of associations, and contributes in some degree to his own and the world's harmony or discord.

«For [Pindar] the gods are our cousins, as it were, from the reigning family, since we all come ultimately from the same mother. Noble men are impelled by the divine inheritance in their blood to try to be like the Olympians... But one should not set one's heart on too remote a goal... This is in accord with the teaching which defines manly worth [*aretê*] as a union of two things: of striving towards lofty ends and of the ability to encompass them. Thus Pindar is no advocate of pusillanimous prudence or of the golden mean of bourgeois contentment, nor does he applaud happiness in obscurity» (Fränkel, p. 474).

The lesson that Pindar drew from the story of the suicide of Ajax (above, Chap. XXI, sec. ii), was that envy and her daughter, slander, are often the reward of those who strive toward and achieve lofty ends: «Tales are a dainty morsel to the envious, and envy ever fasteneth on the noble and striveth not with the base» (Nem. VIII, 21-22). These words introduce his narrative of the suicide, which concludes with a prayer: «O father Zeus, may I never have such a spirit as this. May I tread the straightest path of life, that, when I die, I may leave my children a name that hath to ill-repute» (35-37).

In Ronsard's longest reply to the indivious criticism that greeted his Pindaric initiative (III, 107-113), several verses refer, not without pride in the implied comparison, to the fact that the Theban poet had also encountered the antagonism that superior merit and good repute seem inevitably to evoke:

Ne son lut, ne la congnoissance
Des Muses, n'eurent la puissance
De tromper l'envie qui suit
Non pas une obscure personne,
Mais la fameuse qui foisonne
En tresors de vertueux bruit.
(III, 113)

Envy is one of the themes most frequently encountered in Pindar. «Il n'y a guère d'ode... où il n'en soit question», says Croiset (p. 235). Since it was his function as a lyric poet to bestow praise on those who had become, by their victories, the objects of envy, he was naturally led to treat the subject on many occasions.[1] But it is not difficult to see from the observant attention he has paid to a number of aspects of this problem, that he had reflected much upon it, and that his reflections were charged with profound aversion for so mean a sentiment.

«This is grievous to me», he says, «that envy should be the reward of noble deeds» (Pyth., VII, 18-19). He voices his ideal of kingship, rather than a description of Hieron, when he portrays the monarch of Syracuse «as a king who is gentle to his subjects, harboring no envy against those who are noble» (Pyth., III, 70-71). It must seem remarkable with what persistence and mordancy he returns to this antithesis between the envious and the noble. «Talvolta», says Francesco Guglielmino, «le parole che usa per le arti dei detrattori invidiosi che tentano schizzare fango sull'oro, sono così sdegnose ed aspre che par che egli manifesti il disgusto per conto suo.»[2]

In the second Olympian ode (476 B.C.) for Theron, tyrant of Acragas, Pindar seems to be defending his novel and difficult poetic style against certain detractors. He has harsh words for two rivals whom he does not name, but who, according to the «generally prevalent view» reported by the scholiasts, were Simonides and Bacchylides:[3] «Many a swift arrow have I beneath mine arm, within my quiver, many an arrow that is vocal to the wise; but for the crowd they need interpreters. The true poet is he who knoweth much by

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[1] For example, in Ol., VI, 74-76: «The cavil of others that are envious hangeth over all, whoever reach the goal as victors in the race, as they round the twelfth lap, while an adorable grace sheddeth over them a noble beauty. Cf. Ronsard:

Les envieus & l'envie
Espient tousjours la vie
De l'homme, à qui le bon heur,
Et la victoire honnorable
Par sa face venerable
Ont fait couler un honneur.
(I, 104)

[2] «Quel che Pindaro sentiva di sè», *Atene e Roma*, Nuova Serie — VIII (1927), p. 39.

[3] Farnell II, 22; but he and Gildersleeve, p. 152, find this inadmissible. Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 10, 122, seems to hesitate.

gift of nature, but they that have only learnt the lore of song, and are turbulent and intemperate of tongue, like a pair of crows, chatter in vain against the god-like bird of Zeus» (Ol., II, 83-88).[4]

In his use of this passage, which he divided between two of his Pindaric odes, Ronsard's discretion is comparable to that of Pindar. He refers to rivals in language at least as forceful as that of the Theban poet, but he refrains from mentioning them by name. In Ode III, *A Madame Marguerite*, he writes:

> J'ai sous l'esselle un carquois
> Gros de fleches nompareilles,
> Qui ne font bruire leurs vois
> Que pour les doctes oreilles:
> Leur roideur n'est apparante
> A telle bande ignorante...
> (I, 73)

The «bande ignorante» is that of the contemporary poets who had earlier celebrated the sister of Henri II:

> ... nos poëtes barbares,
> Qui ses saintes vertus rares
> Ont souillé premierement.
> (I, 72-73)

Laumonier's note on these verses states that they are an «Allusion à Mellin de Saint-Gelais, François Habert et autres poètes rhétoriqueurs et marotiques». This ode to Princess Marguerite was composed in the second half of 1549 (*RPL*, p. 63). It is by no means an isolated example, in the period between 1547 or 1548 and April 1550, of similar references to the poets who preceded Ronsard and his colleagues of Coqueret and Boncourt, and were about to be largely eclipsed by them. In the ode *A la Roine* of 1547 or 1548 (*RPL*, p. 60), we read:

> Un tas qui chantent de toi,
> Ne sçavent si bien que moi,
> Comme l'on sonne la gloire.
> (I, 70)

The accompanying note again describes these lines as an allusion to the Rhétoriqueurs and Marotiques. The *Hymne de France*, which dates from October 1549 (I, 34, n. 1, end), concludes with a plea to the «terre plantureuse» of France:

> Je te supply, qu'à gré te soit ma lyre:
> Et si quelcun enraige de médire,
> Soit il prisé de l'obscure populaire,
> Et ses labeurs ne puissent jamais plaire

[4] Cf. Nem., III, 80-82; IV, 37-41; VIII, 20-21.

A deux ou trois, l'honneur de ta province,
Ny aux saincts yeux de mon grand Roy, ton Prince.
(I, 35)

These repeated attacks by Ronsard on anonymous individuals were surely not inspired by some vague and generalized wish to express disapproval of slander. Some notion of the impending poetic revolution was in the air even before the publication of Du Bellay's *Deffence* and *Vers lyriques* about 21 April 1549.[5] Possibly also some examples of the sort of poetry that was being written by the avant-garde students of Dorat and Muret, not to mention Peletier's *Œuvres Poëtiques* of 1547, had begun to circulate before the appearance of Du Bellay's manifesto and his earliest odes. Negative reactions from the older poetic establishment were not only probable, but almost certainly inevitable.

It was to these disparaging comments that Ronsard in turn reacted with extraordinary violence in the preface to the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes*, whose *privilège* is dated 10 January 1550 (I, 60). «Je ne fai point de doute», he wrote, «que ma Poësie tant varie ne semble facheuse aus oreilles de nos rimeurs... pour le moins, je m'assure qu'ils ne me sçauroient accuser, sans condamner premierement Pindare auteur de telle copieuse diversité... Pour telle vermine de gens ignorantement envieuse ce petit labeur n'est publié, mais pour les gentils espris, ardans de la vertu... Mais que doit-on esperer d'eus? lesquels étants parvenus plus par opinion, peut estre, que par raison, ne font trouver bon aus princes sinon ce qu'il leur plaist; & ne pouvants souffrir que la clarté brusle leur ignorance, en medisant des labeurs d'autrui deçoivent le naturel jugement des hommes abusés par leurs mines. Tel fut jadis Bacchylide à l'entour d'Hieron Roi de Sicile tant notté par les vers de Pindare...» (I, 47-49, *passim*).

Ronsard's deep preoccupation with these attacks is visible in three other passages dating from 1549 or early 1550. In Ode IX to Du Bellay he refers to the storm «Des mesdisans impetueus» (I, 119-120), and in the *Ode de la Paix* he urges this advice upon Henri II:

N'ecoute point les detracteurs,
Et fui de bien loin les flateurs
S'ils veullent oindre tes oreilles
De fausses & vaines merveilles,
Fardant sous vaine autorité
Le vain abus de leurs vains songes,
Sutils artizans de mensonges
Qui vont pipant la verité...

[5] For the date see Henri Chamard, *Joachim Du Bellay*, p. 98.

The words have a disinterested ring, but in the verses that follow one sees that the poet is defending the novelty of his lyric style against the calumnies of the anonymous slanderers:

> L'un se ronge le cerveau,
> L'autre medit & raporte
> S'il sent qu'un esprit nouveau
> Nouvelles chansons aporte.
> (III, 31)

If there were any doubt as to Ronsard's immediate purpose, which was to neutralize the influence that the *médisants* might have with Henri II, it would be set to rest by the following strophe:

> Il faut qu'en me parant j'evite
> L'escrime de leur langue, vite
> A tirer l'estoc dangereus:
> Si est ce que j'oi tousjours dire
> Qu'un homme engressé de medire
> Megrit à la fin malheureus.
> (III, 32)

These passages from the *Ode de la Paix*, more or less heavily indebted to Pindar,[6] were composed, probably without exception, before the summer of 1550. In none of them is any of Ronsard's antagonists mentioned by name, but it is clear that his poetry had for many months been the object of a shadowy campaign of denigration by «ces fameus Sciamaches», or «fighters in the shade» (I, 49 and n. 1). The «scène de la médisance», in which the principal actor and traducer of Ronsard was Mellin de Saint-Gelais, was thus not an unprecedented occurrence, but a performance that had apparently been played out more than once before the «divinities» of the Court, and at least once in the presence of Henri II. Here is Laumonier's lucid account of this decisive moment in the literary history of the French Renaissance: «C'est, en effet, soit en mai, soit en juin 1550, que je place (on verra pourquoi tout à l'heure)[7] la fameuse scène de la médisance, où Saint-Gelais lut à Henri II les vers pindariques de Ronsard en lui faisant ressortir l'obscurité et l'emphase de certains passages perfidement choisis. Déjà dans l'*Ode de la Paix* Ronsard cherchait à parer les dangereux coups de langue des adversaires personnels qu'il avait à la Cour, se rendant très nettement compte que, malgré la réserve élogieuse qu'il avait cru habile de faire à l'égard de Saint-Gelais dans la préface des *Odes* [I, 46], celui-ci ne lui pardonnait ni la violence des attaques dirigées contre les Marotiques en général, ni surtout la condamnation brutale

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[6] See Laumonier's notes and *POR*, pp. 42-43, 53-54. — On envy in Ronsard cf. my article on «Ronsard's Ethical Thought», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), 101-103.

[7] See III, pp. ix-xi, and p. xi, n. 1.

des poètes courtisans qui goûtaient alors 'les mannes de la royale grandeur [I, 50]'. Mais il n'avait sans doute pas encore la preuve matérielle que Saint-Gelais le desservait auprès du roi; ses présomptions et ses craintes ne devinrent une certitude que le jour où Madame Marguerite et son chancelier, Michel de l'Hospital, eurent pris le vieux courtisan en flagrant délit et plaidé victorieusement contre lui la cause de leur protégé. Alors seulement Ronsard le démasqua et le dénonça à la première occasion, qui ne tarda pas à s'offrir.» (III, p. viii).

The occasion came in the summer of 1550, not long after the «scène de la médisance», when Ronsard composed a long ode *A Madame Marguerite* in gratitude for her intervention on his behalf with her brother Henri II:

N'est-ce pas toy, Vierge tresbonne,
Qui ne peult souffrir que personne
Devant tes yeulx soit mesprisé:
Et qui tant me fuz favorable
Quant par l'Envieux miserable
Mon œuvre fut Mellinisé?

Lors qu'un blasmeur avec ses roles,
Pleins de mes plus braves parolles,
Et des vers qui sont les plus miens,
Grinçoit la dent envenimée,
Et aboyoit ma renommée,
Comme au soir la Lune est des chiens.

Se travaillant de faire croire
Au Roy ton frere, que la gloire
Me trahissoit villainement,
Et que par les vers de mon œuvre,
Aultre chose ne se decœuvre
Que mes louenges seulement.
(III, 105-106)

He points out to the Princess that the slanderous treatment he had received from the mouth of Saint-Gelais was but a repetition of the vilifications that Pindar had endured when Simonides had calumniated him before Hieron:

Mainte Ode d'un ply difficile
Rescrivit au Roy de Sicile,
Où les broquars injurieux
De Simonide[8] son contraire,
L'ont moqué, comme chez ton frere
M'ont moqué ceulx des envieux.
(III, 112)

[8] In the editions of 1560-1587 Simonides is replaced by Bacchylides. — Note that in VIII, 357 and IX, 152, Ronsard compares both favorably with Pindar. Before the composition of the ode *A Madame Marguerite* he had regarded Simonides as the virtual equal of Pindar (I, 140), and would do so again many years later (X, 46-47).

In the same summer of 1550, and from the same motive of gratitude, he addressed his Pindaric ode to Michel de l'Hospital, in which, toward the end of the vast poem, he did not fail to allude, in an apostrophe to the Muse, to the dangerous situation from which the Princess and her Chancellor had rescued him:

EPODE [21]

Hâte-toy donc de plyer
Ta chanson trop poursuivie,
De peur (Muse) que l'Envie
N'ait matiere de crier,
Laquelle veult abysmer
Noz noms au fond de la Mer
Par sa langue sacrilege:
Plus elle nous veult plonger,
Plus elle nous faict nager
Hault dessus l'eau comme un liege.
(III, 157-158)

Into this strophe Ronsard has skillfully integrated passages in which Pindar denounced the vices of envy and slander: «From telling all the story [of the exploits of Telamon and Heracles], I am stayed by the law of my song... What though the deep brine of the sea holdeth thee[9] round the waist, yet stand thou thy ground against the dark design» (Nem., IV, 33, 36-37). «Stealthy purveyors of slander are a curse that baffles both sides alike... While the rest of the tackle laboreth deep in the sea, I, like a cork above the net, float undipped in the brine» (Pyth., II, 76, 79-80).

Invited to contribute to the second edition of the *Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois*, which appeared «au plus tard en avril 1551» (III, p. ix), Ronsard, still rankling over the injury inflicted upon him by Saint-Gelais, utters a prayer to the spirit of the deceased Queen of Navarre:

Ecarte loing de mon chef
Tout malheur, & tout mechef:
Preserve moy d'infamie,
De toute langue ennemie,
Et de tout acte malin:
Et fay que devant mon Prince
Desormais plus ne me pince
La tenaille de Melin.
(III, 77-78)

For New Year's Day 1553 Ronsard wrote an ode of reconciliation to Saint-Gelais (V, 165-174), but the wounds left by Mellin and others continued to fester for years. How virulently may be judged from these verses in

[9] Timasarchus of Aegina, victor in the boys' wrestling match, whom the poet urges to «strive boldly against calumny» (Sandys, p. 345).

his *Epitafe de Hugues Salel* composed in the second half of 1553, when, in spite of his reconciliation with Saint-Gelais, he continued to endure the attacks of the courtiers:

Tu vis franc de la mort, & du cruel soucy
Tu te moques là bas, qui nous tourmente ici:
Et moi chetif, je vy! & je traine ma vie
Entre mille douleurs, que la bourrelle Envie
Me suscite à grand tort, de pincemens cuisans
Me faisant le joüét d'un tas de mesdisans
Qui dechirent mon nom, & ma gloire naissante
(Dieus destournés ce mal!) par leur langue mechante.
Ah France, ingrate France, & fault-il recevoir
Tant de derisions, pour faire son devoir?
Envoye de là bas (mon Salel) je te prie
Pour leur punition quelque horrible Furie,
Qui d'un foüét retors de serpens furieux
Leur frappe sans repos & la bouche & les yeux,
Et d'un long repentir leur tourne dedans l'ame
Ici mon innocence, & là le meschant blasme
Qu'ilz commettent vers moy, & frayeur leur donnant
La nuict, de mille horreurs les aille espoinçonnant.
(VI, 35-36)[10]

Ronsard had found in Pindar what seems in classical times to have been a proverbial expression of encouragement against invidious attacks. To Hieron, who, as tyrant, was exposed to the envy of certain citizens of Syracuse, the poet wrote, «Since envy is better than pity [κρέσσων γὰρ οἰκτιρμοῦ φθόνος], hold to thy noble course» (Pyth., I, 85). The same thought appears toward the end of the ode to Michel de l'Hospital. The fact that it is set off from the context in quotation marks would appear to suggest that Ronsard was aware of its proverbial character:

STROPHE 22

Contre cette Lice execrable
Resiste d'un doz non plié:
«C'est grand mal d'estre miserable,
«Mais c'est grand bien d'estre envié.
Je scay que tes peines sucrées
Par l'heur de la fatalité,
Seront malgré les ans sacrées
Aux piedz de l'immortalité:
Mais les vers que la chienne Envie
En se rongeant faict avorter,
Jamais ne pouront supporter
Deux Soleilz, sans perdre la vie.
(III, 158-159)

[10] See also VII, 315-316; VIII, 139; IX, 187; X, 22.

The first verse of the seventeenth epigram of the *Livret de folastries* (V, 91) is an avowed imitation of Pindar's proverb at one remove. Ronsard's *huitain* closely paraphrases an epigram by Palladas (*Greek Anthology*, X, 51), which begins with a modified quotation of Pindar's verse: Ὁ φθόνος οἰκτιρμοῦ, κατὰ Πίνδαρον, ἐστὶν ἀμείνων, «Envy, says Pindar, is better than pity».[11] Ronsard's version is preceded by the Greek text of Palladas' first line curtailed of the last two words and thus of much of Pindar's meaning. This is restored, however, in Ronsard's first verse: «Trop plus que la misere est meilleure l'envie.» A later echo of the thought occurs in Ronsard's discourse *De l'Envie* delivered in the Académie du Palais before Henri III: «Le proverbe qu'on dict que celluy est malheureux qui n'a point d'envyeux ne s'entend que de basses & mediocres fortunes & non de celles qui sont venues à toute extremité de grandeur» (XVIII, 466).

II. «Ce papier que pour acquit je t'offre»

The second Pythian ode for Hieron «includes a reference to the deliverance of the Western Locris [by Hieron's forces] from the hostile designs of Anaxilas of Rhegium in 477» (Sandys, p. 168): «O son of Deinomenes,[12] the Locrian maiden in the West singeth thy praise before her door; after bewildering troubles of war, thanks to thy power, her glance is now steadfast» (18-20). To symbolize and commend the gratitude of the Locrians Pindar introduces, for its contrasting effect, the myth of Ixion who, having treacherously repaid the benefactions of Zeus by an attempted seduction of Hera, cries out in remorse from his perpetually revolving wheel that «men should requite the benefactor with fresh tokens of warm gratitude» (24). «Kein Zweifel...», says Wilamowitz (p. 287), concerning Pindar's personal sentiment in this respect, «wie heilig ihm selbst diese Pflicht war».[13]

The third edition of Ronsard's *Odes* (1555) contains a poem *A Martial de Lomenie*, a person who had apparently done Ronsard so great a kindness that the poet feels «... obligé de telle sorte à toi, Que la mort ne perdra les graces que j'en doi...» (VII, 23). In the rather hyperbolical language that is so characteristic of Ronsard at such moments, he writes:

> Si j'estoi, Lomenie, ingrat en ton endroit,
> La Muse, desormais retive, ne voudroit

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[11] W.R. Paton's edition (above, Chap. XXI, n. 80), IV, pp. 28-29. Cf. James Hutton, *The Greek Anthology in France*, p. 352.

[12] Father of Hieron.

[13] See, for example, Ol., X, 9-12; Pyth., V, 43-44; Isth., I, 52-54.

Venir à mes chansons, & pour neant sa trasse
Je suivroi' sur le mont du chevelu Parnasse...
En vain je nommeroi' son nom par les rivages,
Car elle me fuiroit dans les forets sauvages,
Elle, & toutes ses sœurs, comme ne voulant pas
Suivre d'un homme ingrat ni la vois ni les pas.
Pource, Pindare feint que le damné Tantale
Amoneste à bon droit parmi l'ombre infernale
Chacun debteur, de rendre à son tour le bienfait
Qu'un autre, auparavant, ami lui aura fait.[14]

This is perhaps the only passage in Ronsard that expressly reflects Pindar's thought on the duty of gratitude to benefactors. There are a number of other poems in which similar ideas are found,[15] but in the case of commonplaces of this nature their attribution to Pindar would be unjustified. In any event, it is certain that Ronsard, under the pressures of particularly difficult circumstances, did not regard gratitude as a sacred duty. The oath that he swore to the Chastillons in 1555 (VIII, 84, vv. 243-248), was forgotten with the outbreak of the religious wars, when the Coligny family adhered to the Protestant cause. «Non seulement il ne leur adressa plus aucun vers», Laumonier writes (VIII, 84, n. 6), «mais il supprima tout ou partie de certaines pièces qu'il leur avait adressées avant 1560. Il eut même un mot horrible à l'égard de l'amiral Coligny, assassiné à la Saint Barthélemy [XVII, 42, vv. 105-110].»

Considerations of religious sectarianism were not, however, the only determinants of Ronsard's attitude. If sufficiently provoked, he could quite as easily forswear a promise of gratitude made to a Catholic of very high station. «Muses», he writes in the *Epistre... à tresillustre prince Charles, Cardinal de Lorraine* (1556),

Muses, qui les sommetz de Parnasse tenez,
Et qui de nuict & jour voz dances demenez
Sur le bord de Permesse: ô race genereuse,
Qui pressez les ingratz d'une nuict oublieuse,
Vous ne presserez pas ny au siecle futur,
Ny en l'age present, mon nom d'un voile obscur
Soubz le titre d'ingrat, car une ingratte tache
Ne souillera jamais mon cœur, que je le sache:
Ains je diray, Seigneur, à noz peuples françois
Le bien que m'avez fait pour la seconde fois...
(VIII, 340-341)

Ronsard would have been happy to fulfill this promise had the Cardinal shown him a minimum of encouragement. But Charles was as thoroughly

[14] «Mais c'est Ixion et non Tantale qui, par l'ordre des dieux, donne cette leçon aux mortels...» Note by Laumonier.

[15] VII, 306, VIII, 104, 116.

indifferent to the poet's assurances of gratitude as he was to his incessant adulation. After years of fruitless service as the Cardinal's thurifer Ronsard lost patience. In 1561 he addressed *Le Proces*[16] to the prelate and statesman who had for so long guided the destinies of France. The title of the poem gives a clear indication of the mood in which it was written. It consummated the definitive rupture between the poet and the prince of the Church. «Ensuite», says Laumonier, «silence complet de la part de Ronsard; bien que le Cardinal ne soit mort qu'en 1574, il ne lui addressa plus jamais un seul vers...» (XIII, p. vii).[17]

During the reign of Charles IX, surely the happiest period of Ronsard's life, he was on excellent terms with Nicolas de Neufville, Seigneur de Villeroy. «Il n'y a guère de personnages que Ronsard ait plus encensés que Villeroy, 'l'Hercule chasse-mal' et 'le support des Muses'. C'est qu'il lui offrait, ainsi qu'à Dorat, Baïf et Jamin, une hospitalité princière en son château de Conflans, qu'il était l'un des familiers les plus intimes de Charles IX, et que, comme trésorier de ses ordres, il tenait les clefs de la cassette royale» (*RPL*, p. 236).[18]

But the varieties of incense do not all have the same fragrance. One would search in vain, I think, in the accumulation of Ronsard's verses to the Cardinal de Lorraine, possibly even among those to Odet Cardinal de Chastillon, for anything like the accent of genuine sincerity that one hears in these lines to Villeroy composed toward the end of Ronsard's life:

> Or comme un endebté, de qui proche est le terme
> De payer à son maistre ou l'usure, ou la ferme,
> Et n'ayant ny argent ny biens pour secourir
> Sa misere au besoin, desire de mourir:
> Ainsi ton obligé ne pouvant satisfaire
> Aux biens que je te doibs, le jour ne me peult plaire:
> Presque à regret je vy, & à regret je voy
> Les rayons du Soleil s'estendre dessus moy.
> Pource je porte en l'ame une amere tristesse,
> Dequoy mon pied s'avance aux faubourgs de vieillesse,
> Et voy (quelque moyen que je puisse essayer)
> Qu'il faut que je déloge avant que te payer,
> S'il ne te plaist d'ouvrir le ressort de mon coffre,
> Et prendre ce papier que pour acquit je t'offre,
> Et ma plume qui peut, escrivant vérité,
> Tesmoigner ta louange à la posterité.
>
> (XVIII, 42-43)

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[16] It was published in 1565 but written in 1561; see XIII, p. viii.

[17] For a fuller account of the relationship between Ronsard and the Cardinal de Lorraine see Part I, p. 353-369.

[18] Laumonier gives the list of poems addressed by Ronsard to Villeroy and his wife, *RPL*, 236, n. 1. See also Pierre Champion's *Ronsard et Villeroy* (1925).

The «papier» which Ronsard offers so modestly is the beautiful poem of dedication of the *Amours diverses* (inc. *Ja du prochain hyver...*) containing the poet's moving reflections on the troubled times of which he had been a witness, and his expression of gratitude to one who had in great measure made the times more endurable.

III. «Heureux qui peut trouver pour passer l'avanture De ce Monde, un amy de gentille nature»

The death of Castor brings from Polydeuces this prayer to Zeus, his father: «Bid me also die, O king, with my brother. Honour hath perished, when a man is bereft of his friends; and, among mortals, few can be trusted in time of trouble to be partners in one's pain» (Nem., X, 77-79).

«The myth of Kastor and Polydeukes», Farnell wrote in *Greek Hero Cults* (p. 228), «expresses and ennobles the sentiment of friendship, an emotional moral ideal that was passionately cherished by the Hellene and that entered as an unique element into the highest ethical system of Greece. The myth... shines out in the mythology of the world... Pindar... consecrated to it one of his golden moments of inspiration».

In his prayer to Zeus, Polydeuces, totally possessed by grief, could think of Castor only as a partner in pain in a time of trouble. But this does not exhaust Pindar's concept of friendship: «Varied indeed are the uses of friends», he says in the eighth Nemean, «the help that is given in the time of distress standeth highest, yet joy is also eager to set before men's eyes a pledge of friendship» (42-44), or, as Aimé Puech translates the last phrase, «la joie aussi aime à poser son regard sur un ami sûr» (III, 113).

The fabric of friendship in sorrow or in joy is indivisible. In 1543, long before he had encountered Pindar, Ronsard wrote to Gaspard d'Auvergne:

... avecques providence
Fai un ami, dont l'heureuse prudence
Te servira de secours necessaire
Contre l'heure aversaire.

Ton cueur bien preparé,
De force r'emparé
En la fortune averse
Patience prendra:
En la bonne, craindra
Que l'heur ne le renverse.

Apres l'iver, la saison variable
Pousse en avant le printens amiable:
Si aujourdhui nous sommes soucieus,
Demain nous serons mieus.
(II, 173)

It was at the close of the long period of intense absorption in the study of Greek language and literature under Dorat that Ronsard celebrated the friendship between Du Bellay and himself, a friendship founded on the similarity of their poetic and intellectual interests. In the preface to the *Odes* Ronsard explains that he had long refused to publish this work, «mémement solicité par Joachim du Bellai, duquel le jugement, l'etude pareille, la longue frequentation, & l'ardant desir de reveiller la Poësie Françoise avant nous foible, & languissante... nous a rendus presque semblables d'esprit, d'inventions, & de labeur» (I, 46). The awakening to which Ronsard refers was an awakening to the values of Greek lyric poetry and especially to that of Pindar, for in the lines to the reader that follow immediately he says, «Je ne te dirai point à present que signifie Strophe, Antistrophe, Epode... je tairai comme Pindare faisoit chanter les hinnes écris à la louange des vainqueurs Olympiens, Pithiens, Nemeans, Isthmiens. Je reserve tout ce discours à un meilleur loisir...»

The close similarity «d'esprit, d'inventions, & de labeur» that united Du Bellay and Ronsard at this time led him to dedicate one of his most ambitious Pindaric odes *A Jouachim du Bellai Angevin*. It begins with a glorification of Du Bellay for the warm welcome and moral support he has given to Ronsard's Pindaric initiative:

STROPHE 1

Aujourdui je me vanterai
Que jamais je ne chanterai
Un homme plus aimé que toi
Des neuf pucelles & de moi...[19]

ANTISTROPHE [1]

Hai avant Muse, ores il faut
Le guinder par l'air aussi haut
Que ses vertus m'ont mis ici
Dessous le joug d'un dous souci:
Il le merite ma mignonne,
Nul tant que lui n'est adorant
Les vers dont tu vas honorant
La gloire de ceus que je sonne:
Il s'égaie de tes chansons,
Et de ces nouvelles façons,
Auparavant non imitables,
Qui font émerveiller les tables,
Et les gros sourcis renfoncer
De cette jalouse ignorance,
Qui ose desja par la France
L'honneur de mes vers offenser.
(I, 108-110)

[19] Laumonier's note correctly traces the poetic movement to the beginning of the fourth Pythian: «Today, thou must stand, my Muse, in the presence of a friend...» The substance of the passage seems, however, to be taken from Ol., I, 103 ff.

In the fourth antistrophe Ronsard extolls Du Bellay's *vertus* in language that suggests that their friendship in these early years was strengthened by a collaborative effort to naturalize the Pindaric ode in France:[20]

Les tiennes ont tant de valeur
Qu'encores s'on cachoit la leur,[21]
Sous le silence elle croistroit
Et plus sa flamme apparoistroit:
Car tout ainsi que la mer passe
L'honneur d'un chaq'un élément,
Et le souleil semblablement
Les moindres feus du ciel éface,[22]
Ainsi apparoissent les traits
Dont tu émailles les portraits
De la riche peinture tienne
Tant semblable au vif de la mienne,
Montrant par ton commencement,
Que mesme fureur nous afolle,
Tous deus disciples d'une écolle
Où l'on forcene doucement.
(I, 117)

In another ode of the same period *A Joachim du Bellay* Ronsard says that it was the «belle science» of poetry

Qui commença l'alience
De corps, & d'ame entre nous...
(I, 147)

Thus the Pindaric collaboration of the two poets may, I think, be safely considered an established fact of the literary history of the French Renais-

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[20] See my articles on «Pindaric Parallelism in Du Bellay», *French Review*, XIV (1941), 461-472; «Did Du Bellay Know Pindar?» *PMLA*, LVI (1941), 1007-1019; «Du Bellay and Hellenic Poetry: A Cursory View — III. The Poet's Knowledge of the Theory and Methodology of the Greek Ode», *PMLA*, LX (1945), 670-681; IV. «Imitations of the Greek Lyric Poets», *PMLA*, LX (1945), 949-958; «Ronsard and Du Bellay on their Pindaric Collaboration», *RR*, XXXIII (1942), 3-25; «Ronsard Imitator of Du Bellay», *Studies in Philology*, XXXVIII (1941), 165-187. — These studies indicate that two passages in both the 1927 and 1965 editions of Marcel Raymond's magisterial thesis on *L'Influence de Ronsard sur la poésie française (1550-1585)* require modification: p. 105, «En 1549, il [Du Bellay] est plein de fougue juvénile, et si sa connaissance superficielle du grec l'empêche de 'pindariser' sans intermédiaire, il se pourrait justement qu'elle le liât d'autant plus au 'Pindare Français'»; p. 110, «... il serait tout à fait extraordinaire qu'il [Du Bellay] eût servi de modèle au 'nouveau Terpandre' [Ronsard], tandis qu'il est vraisemblable qu'il s'est mis à son école pour écrire à son tour des vers 'doctes', dans le style 'élevé' que l'on commençait à adopter de toute part». In reality, Du Bellay needed no intermediary in order to imitate Pindar, and on a number of occasions it was Ronsard who imitated Du Bellay.

[21] «La valeur de tes vertus.» Marginal note by Laumonier in his personal copy of vol. I of the critical edition.

[22] In the preceding four verses the imitation of the beginning of the first Olympian is unmistakable. The other sources suggested in Laumonier's note are less convincing.

sance. If the two last quoted verses could be taken as expressing the settled conviction and sentiment of Ronsard, one might assume that the collaboration was sealed in intimate and enduring friendship.

On that point, however, André Leroy has raised serious doubts in a well-documented article. «Mais l'amitié», he says, «est autre chose qu'une collaboration, même intime et enthousiaste. Elle suppose une sympathie profonde, un accord des sentiments qui fait que l'ami partage toutes les joies de son ami et ressent ses moindres souffrances...» Leroy's careful examination of the relevant texts has shown that Du Bellay did indeed repeatedly offer with gentle discretion and sincerity a deep and warm relationship, before, during, and after the Roman years, but that it was Ronsard who was not *à la hauteur*. «En amitié comme en amour, il semble avoir ignoré ce qu'est le don de soi-même; il y avait en lui un grand fond d'égoïsme et ses sentiments n'ont jamais été durables.» «Le silence de Ronsard, souvent sollicité de répondre aux affectueuses confidences de son ami, ne peut s'expliquer que par l'incompréhension de ce besoin, par l'incapacité de sentir profondément, d'aimer de toute son âme... Le retour même de Du Bellay [de Rome] ne devait pas éveiller chez Ronsard l'affection profonde dont il était sans doute incapable.»[23]

With respect to Ronsard's friendship in general Laumonier had to some extent anticipated by a quarter of a century the conclusion reached by Leroy in the particular case of Ronsard's relations with Du Bellay. In 1910 he studied the «substitution de noms propres dans les dédicaces des œuvres de Ronsard», and listed many «exemples de changements de dédicaces, dont les uns s'expliquent, se justifient même, dont les autres me semblent témoigner plutôt d'une certaine 'inconstance d'amitié', surtout ceux qui ont eu lieu après la mort des intéressés» (*Vie*, pp. 216 and 217). Raymond Lebègue concurs in the judgments of Laumonier and Leroy. «Je ne trouve pas dans sa vie d'amitié profonde pour ses compagnons de poésie. Plusieurs fois il s'est brouillé avec Baïf, et quand le pauvre Du Bellay se morfondait à Rome, il prit rarement la peine de lui écrire et de le réconforter.»[24]

In addition to altering the *dédicataires* of his poems,[25] Ronsard made grave changes, «après la mort des intéressés», which sometimes went so far as to distort their ultimate position in literary history. Two of these involved Joachim Du Bellay, the comrade who had shared with him the honor of introducing the Pindaric ode into French literature.

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[23] André Leroy, «Une amitié littéraire: Ronsard et Du Bellay», *Mélanges Paul Laumonier* (1935), pp. 219, 231, 233-234.

[24] Raymond Lebègue, «Ronsard en Touraine et en Vendômois (1565-1570)», *Bull. de l'Assoc. G. Budé*, 4e série (1957), p. 47.

[25] See Raymond Lebègue, «Les dédicataires des poésies de Ronsard», *Studi Francesi*, vol. 18, n° 54 (1974), 475-478.

«Nous... aimerions penser», André Leroy wrote, «que Ronsard garda au fond du cœur le souvenir de l'absent. La vérité nous oblige à terminer par des traits peu glorieux pour lui. Nous le voyons en 1584 sacrifier la priorité de son ancien ami dans les sonnets d'amour, pour se concilier les bonnes grâces de Pontus de Tyard, évêque de Châlons depuis 1578. Il avait écrit, en 1553, dans l'*Elegie à La Péruse*, venant de parler de Du Bellay:

> Apres Tiard, amoureus comme lui,
> D'un autre vers soupira son ennui...
> [*L.*, V, 261]

Dans son édition de 1584, il remplace ces vers par les suivants:

> Long temps davant d'un ton plus haut que luy
> Tyard chanta son amoureux ennuy...
> [*LL.*, V, 35]

Il y a plus. Sans même avoir la triste excuse de flatter un grand personnage, il supprime dans cette même édition quatre vers de l'*Ode à sa Lyre* de 1550, particulièrement flatteurs pour Du Bellay:

> Puis affectant un euvre plus divin
> Je t'envoiai sous le pousse Angevin,
> Qui depuis moi t'a si bien fredonnée
> Qu'à nous deus seuls la gloire en soit donnée.»[26]
> [*L.*, I, 164]

With Leroy one regrets the lack of magnanimity that these examples demonstrate. Nevertheless, it is only just to point out that Ronsard at no time withdrew his description, drawn from Ol., II, 86-88, of Du Bellay and himself as two Pindaric eagles soaring far above the flock of vainly chattering crows, their rivals in poetry. In 1550 it read:

> Eus égualés à nos chants beaus,
> Ils sont semblables aus corbeaus
> Lesquels desous l'ombre quaquetent
> Contre deus aigles, qui aguetent
> (Portans la foudre du grand Roi)[27]
> Le tens de ruer leurs tempestes
> Desus les miserables testes
> De ces criards palles d'éfroi.
> (*L.*, I, 111-112)

And in 1587:

> Comparez à nos chants nouveaux,
> Sont faits[28] semblables aux corbeaux

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[26] André Leroy, *art. cit.*, p. 240.

[27] In 1550 Ronsard placed himself, Du Bellay, and their poetic revolution under the protection of Henri II, whose favor would be more efficacious than that of Zeus, invoked by Pindar in the parallel passage of Olympian II.

[28] The antecedent is «ces farceurs» in the fifth preceding verse.

Qui dessous les fueilles caquettent
Contre deus Aigles, qui aguettent
Aupres du throne de leur Roy,[29]
Le temps de ruer leurs tempestes
Dessus les miserables testes
De ces criars palles d'effroy.
(*S.*, III, 86)

The contrast between the Pindaric ode for Du Bellay and the one for Jean-Antoine de Baïf could hardly be greater. In the first Ronsard celebrated the similarity of interests and creative impulses that united them; in the second, in spite of some laudatory verses muffled in rather faint praise, the emphasis is on the differences that divide them. The first is among Ronsard's longest Pindaric poems, the second, a single triad, among the shortest, and its initial lines sound as though Ronsard had sought to repudiate, while seeming to maintain, the principle of eulogy-in-friendship that normally inspires this poetic form.

The strophe is a masterpiece of ambivalence:

J'ai tousjours celé les fautes
Dont mes amis sont tachés,
J'ai tousjours teu leurs pechés,
Mais non pas leurs vertus hautes:[30]
Car moi qui suis le sonneur
Et le courier des louanges,
Je ne porte aus gens étranges
Sinon la gloire & l'honneur,
Que le ciel large donneur
Aiant quelque soin de toi
T'a departi comme à moi,
Versant sur ta langue sage
Un saint tresor de beaus vers,
Afin que son dous message
S'épande par l'univers.
(I, 128-129)

A thought that is expressed in a variety of ways in several of Pindar's odes,[31] and is already latent in vv. 9-11 of Ronsard's strophe, is further developed in the antistrophe:

Maint chemin nous peut atraire
Pour venir à la vertu,

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[29] In 1585, when this revision was made, Ronsard remembered that the eagle, the bird of Zeus, is mentioned in the prelude of the first Pythian as resting on the scepter of the Sky-god.

[30] «Sur les relations parfois tendues entre Baïf et Ronsard et les divergences de leurs caractères, voir mon article [«Contribution à l'étude historique de Ronsard. III. Une brouille entre Ronsard et Ant. de Baïf»], des *Ann. Fléch.*, 1909, n° de juillet, pp. 277 et suiv.» Note by Laumonier. — Cf. Augé-Chiquet, pp. 66-69.

[31] Pyth., X, 59-60; Nem., I, 25; VII, 5-6, 54-55; Isth., I, 47.

D'un bien un tel est vétu,
L'autre d'un autre au contraire.
Premier j'ai dit la façon
D'acorder le luc aus Odes,
Et premier tu t'acommodes
A la tragique chanson...
(I, 129-130)

The epode returns with increased emphasis to the diversity of gifts allotted by destiny to different men:

D'esprit, & d'art, voulontiers
Tretous differans nous sommes,
Ne deus ne quatre mestiers
Ne nourrissent pas les hommes:
Mais quiconque a le sçavoir
Celui doit l'honneur avoir:
O BAÏF, la plume pronte
Vouloir monter jusqu'aus dieus,
D'un vol qui le ciel surmonte
Trompe l'enfer odieus.
(I, 131)

The governing idea of this strange eulogy was not, of course, dictated by Pindar, but by the ambivalence of Ronsard's relations with Baïf, which caused him to bring together from the Theban's triumphal odes a number of remembered passages through which that ambivalence might find adequate expression and, so to speak, a natural justification. When Ronsard writes «Maint chemin nous peut atraire» and the following three verses, he seems to put his reliance in a passage of the ninth Olympian: «Some roads lead further than others, and it is not all of us that can prosper in a single path[32] of work» (104-107).[33] But vv. 20-23 and 31-34 of Ronsard's ode make it appear that what is at issue between the two poets is the establishment of their respective priorities in the renewal of the ancient genres of lyric and tragic poetry. «D'esprit, & d'art, voulontiers Tretous differans nous sommes», Ronsard writes, apparently paraphrasing Pindar's first Nemean ode: τέχναι δ'ἑτέρων ἔτεραι (25), «Diverse are the different arts of different men» (trans. Farnell).[34]

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[32] Sandys translates freely Pindar's μελέτα, for which Slater gives *concern, preoccupation*, Myers, *practice*, Farnell, *occupation*, Lattimore, *discipline, Puech, études.*

[33] In addition to these verses Laumonier (I, 129, n. 2) suggests Ol., VIII, 12-14, which convey much the same idea.

[34] «Each hath his several art» (Myers); «Skills vary with the man» (Lattimore); «Les hommes ont leurs arts, qui sont divers» (Puech); «Various men excel in various ways» (Sandys). — Note, however, that *Ne nourrissent pas* (v. 34) takes us back to Ol., IX, 106, οὐχ... θρέψει, lit. *does not nourish.*

In spite of their differences, the two poets maintained the friendship begun during their years under Dorat at the Collège de Coqueret, where Baïf, who had already had the advantage of much study of the Greek language, helped the neophyte Ronsard over the more arduous passages, while receiving in return an indoctrination into the mysteries of French poetry (*Vie*, pp. 11-12). The relationship with Baïf was still alive, and was to remain so for many years,[35] when Ronsard wrote in 1569:

> J'auray toujours un Baïf dans le cœur,
> Ayantz passé souz Dorat noz jeunesses,
> Tous deux amis des neuf belles Déesses...
> (XV, 59-60)

But like Du Bellay, Baïf did not escape the effects of Ronsard's «inconstance d'amitié». On this assertion that Baïf would forever have a place in his heart, Laumonier's note says, «Ceci fut écrit durant une période de paix entre les deux poètes, dont les caractères et les goûts se heurtèrent plus d'une fois au cours de leur carrière. Il y eut encore mésentente dans la suite, car Ronsard crut devoir supprimer ce passage après 1578. Aussi Baïf ne put-il s'empêcher d'écrire dans un sonnet destiné au 'tombeau' de son vieux camarade:

> Subjets à la Fortune, exposés à l'Envie,
> Ores bien, ores mal nous menons ceste vie,
> Où la douce raison cède aux aigres humeurs.»
> (*S.*, VIII, 169)

In his article on Ronsard and Du Bellay, André Leroy noted how the former had revised literary history in 1584 at the expense of Du Bellay «pour se concilier les bonnes grâces de Pontus de Tyard, évêque de Châlons». A parallel revision, though one of lesser importance, was made in the same year in the case of Baïf, and the beneficiary, once again, was Tyard. In 1553 Ronsard had written in *Les Isles fortunées à Marc-Antoine de Muret* that he saw the avant-garde of the poets of France gathering to accompany Muret and himself on their voyage to the Blessed Isles:

> Je voi Baïf, Denizot, Tahureau,
> Mesme, du Parc, Bellai, Dorat...
> (V, 178-179)

In the editions of 1584 and 1587 the first verse is replaced by:

> Je voy Thiar, des Autels, & Belleau...
> (*LL.*, V, 159)

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[35] See, for example, Ronsard's letter to Baïf in 1584 (XVIII, 489-490).

Thus the very signal honor of being mentioned first in such a brilliant constellation of more than a score of poets and other writers was taken away from Baïf, and his name, though not omitted altogether, was relegated to a comparatively indifferent position in a later verse. His resentment of this mercurial friendship may still be felt in his sonnet for Ronsard's *Tombeau*.

In the *Hymne de l'Autonne* (1563) Ronsard refers to himself as a

> Disciple de d'Aurat, qui long temps fut mon maistre,
> M'aprist la Poësie...
> (XII, 50)

Dorat (1508-1588) was Ronsard's senior by sixteen years, but from the beginning the relationship between them, and between Dorat and most of his pupils, was deeper than the usual one of master and disciple. The difference in age was no obstacle to their friendship. «Certes la grande ode pindarique de 1550 offerte à Ronsard [*L.*, II, 216-222] est d'inspiration littéraire, mais l'affection du maître transparaît; il évoque sa propre joie d'avoir rencontré un élève génial et exigeant, à qui il puisse offrir les résultats de son travail de recherche.»[36]

Dorat's Pindaric ode in Latin was composed as a gift in exchange for the one in French (inc. *Le medecin de la peine*) that Ronsard had dedicated to him in 1549 (I, 126-128). To Ronsard's expression of gratitude for the guidance of so accomplished a master in initiating him and his fellow students into the beauties of Greek and Latin literature, Dorat replies, «... l'aimable son de la cithare d'ivoire, c'est toi qui le gouvernes, sans qu'il soit pour toi d'autre initiateur, d'autre maître que toi-même, Pierre. Mais ton amour pour tes amis, la pureté éclatante de ton cœur te portent préjudice et te retirent la gloire pour l'attribuer aux autres. J'avais bien une place parmi ces derniers, je le proclame...» (trans. Geneviève Demerson, pp. 60-62).

That place which Dorat claimed with such self-effacing modesty was his from the earliest to the latest moments of Ronsard's career.[37] In the prelude to the *Bacchanales*, immediately after the mention of Du Bellay and Baïf, Dorat is referred to in a manner that distinguishes him both as a friend among friends, and as a scholar whose erudition brings glory to his country:

> Dieu gard la sçavante troppe,
> Calliope
> Grave au Ciel vostre renom,
> Bellay, Baïf, & encores

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[36] Geneviève Demerson, *Jean Dorat: Les Odes latines* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1979), p. 25. — The ode in question is no. IV in Geneviève Demerson's book, pp. 54-63. It is followed by Dorat's Alcaic ode to Ronsard, no. V, on pp. 64-65.

[37] See *TFI*, pp. 43-50, on «Ronsard's Lifelong Dialogue with Dorat», and *RGL*, Part I, pp. 256-259, «Dorat, Ronsard, and the Pindaric Ode».

Toy qui dores
La France en l'or de ton nom.
(III, 186-187)

It is not surprising that in the *Bacchanales*, written in 1549 (III, p. xv) during the heyday of the interest in Pindar at Coqueret, Dorat and his teaching, especially in its Pindaric aspects, occupy a position of considerable importance.

Dorat taught the classical authors with a passionate warmth that endeared him to his students. Pierre de Nolhac might indeed say: «La fortune des lettres françaises a voulu que Ronsard rencontrât, pour l'introduire auprès des véritables maîtres de son génie, un guide incomparable, à la fois docte et enthousiaste» (*Rons. et l'Hum.*, p. 52). This blend of erudition with ardor in communicating it to a sympathetic audience, coming at a time when Ronsard and his colleagues were chafting at the inadequacies of the poetry then in vogue, was a significant factor in igniting the impetuous movement of reform that characterized the decade of the 1550s. «Il suffira de rappeler ici que notre poète devint dès lors un ardent érudit, un passionné de mythologie hésiodique, pindarique et alexandrine, recueillant avec un soin pieux les traductions de Dorat, ses commentaires et ses rapprochements entre les écrivains grecs et les écrivains latins...» (*RPL*, p. 48).

But the participation of Dorat in the activities of his students inevitably went well beyond the walls of the lecture hall since he was himself a poet, fully responsive to the ideals that motivated his young friends. As Geneviève Demerson writes: «Les années 1549-1550 paraissent avoir été particulièrement fructueuses. Dorat... a pris part à la 'révolution poétique': le professeur s'est rangé dans la bataille aux côtés des poètes; pour soutenir ses disciples, il se fait poète; il montre par l'exemple ce que peut être le pindarisme, il l'explique. Il s'assure, auprès de Madame Marguerite, l'appui dont ils ont besoin à la Cour. Il suscite mieux que la neutralité bienveillante, l'admiration de Salmon Macrin, homme influent dans le clan des 'latineurs'.»[38]

It must therefore have been with a particular sense of rapport, with more than usual warmth, that the students of Coqueret offered Dorat the traditional banquet commemorated in the *Bacchanales*. Among the festivities was a joyous travesty of an agon consisting in the pursuit and capture of butterflies. To the student who succeeded in catching the loveliest of the «aisléz trouppeaux», Dorat was to sing «un bel hynne», a hymn of victory, a καλλίνικος in imitation of the epinician odes composed by the poets of Hellenic antiquity to honor those who were successful in the athletic festivals:

[38] *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

Lequel aura la victoyre,
Et la gloyre
D'avoyr conquis le plus beau,
Qui tout doré sert de guide
Par le vuide,
A ceste escadron nouveau?

Lequel pendra de la beste
La conqueste,
Pour trophée de bon heur?
Celuy vrayment sera digne
Qu'un bel hynne
Dorat chante à son honneur.[39]

In the excitement of the ensuing chase the promised triumphal hymn by Dorat is forgotten. Instead he performs something less ambitious but equally appropriate to the occasion — a celebration of the fountain of Arcueil, site of the promenade and banquet offered by the students to their professor. But if the song of victory has been forgotten, the same may not be said of the ancient poet whose name is most closely associated with the hymn of triumph:

Iö compains, n'oyez vous
De Dorat la voix sucrée,
Qui recrée
Tout le Ciel d'un chant si doulx?

Iö iö qu'on s'avance,
Il commence
Encore à former ses chantz,
Celebrant en voix Romaine
La fontaine,
Et toutz les Dieux de ces champs.[40]

Preston donq à ses merveilles
Noz oreilles:
L'entusiasme Limousin
Ne luy permet rien de dire
Sur sa lyre
Qui ne soit divin divin...

Quand je l'entens, il me semble
Que l'on m'emble

[39] In *RGL*, Part I, pp. 155-160, the pursuit of the butterflies was seen to be a merry parody of the orgiastic frenzy portrayed in the *Bacchae*. In the present verses the Euripidean drama encounters the triumphal ode of Pindar and the tragic pursuit of Pentheus is transformed into a festive agon.

[40] The song performed by Dorat was *Ad fontem Arculii sive Herculii pagi in agro Parisino*. To Laumonier's note (III, 214, n. 2) giving the loci where the text is found, one may add André Desguine *Etude des Bacchanales*, pp. 69-71; the same author's *Jean Dorat (1508-1588)* (Ouvrage hors commerce, 1977), pp. 13-15; Geneviève Demerson, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-51.

Mon esprit d'un rapt soudain,
Et que loing du peuple j'erre
Soubz la terre,
Avec l'ame du Thebain...[41]
(III, 213-215)

The fourth Nemean begins with a metaphor that must have been immediately comprehensible and congenial to the agonists who participated in the Games and to Pindar's auditors: «When toilsome contests have been decided, the best of healers is good cheer; and songs, that are the sage daughters of the Muses, are wont to soothe the victor by their touch. Nor doth warm water soothe the limbs so gently as praise that is linked with the lyre» (1-5).

It is under this image of the agonist, his fatigues of the arena soothed by the triumphal ode as though by the warmth of the bath, that Ronsard conceives the teacher who had introduced him and so many others to the beauties and difficulties of the Pindaric ode. But the arena of this new sort of agonist is the field of humanistic studies, and if his reward is the same, his labors are of a different sort:

STROPHE 1

Le medecin de la peine
C'est le plaisir qui ameine
Un repos aveque lui,
Et les Odes qui nous flatent
Par leurs douceurs qui abatent
La memoire de l'ennui:
Le bain ne soulage pas
Si bien les cors qui sont las
Comme la louange douce
Nous soulage, que du pouce
A la lire nous joignons,[42]
Par qui les plaies de l'ame
(Lors qu'un déplaisir l'entame)
Heureusement nous oignons.

ANTISTROPHE

Certes ma chanson sucrée
Qui les grands Princes recrée
Te pourra bien derider,
Apres ta peine publique
Où ta faconde s'aplique
Pour la jeunesse guider,
Le haut bruit de ton sçavoir
Evidemment nous fait veoir

[41] The immediately following verse is «Avecque l'ame d'Horace», which harmonizes better with v. 580 that with v. 600. But the «error» is intentional — for both Dorat and Ronsard, as Geneviève Demerson points out, *op. cit.*, p. 6, «les deux maîtres du lyrisme sont Pindare et Horace».

[42] See *POR*, pp. 40-41, for a comparison of the French and Greek texts of these first verses.

Que tu brises l'ignorance,
Renommé parmi la France
Ainsi qu'un oracle vieus
Pour denouer aus plus sages
Les plus ennoués passages
Des livres laborieus.

EPODE

Tant d'ames ne courent pas
Apres Alcée là bas,
Alors qu'horrible il acorde
Les guerres desus sa chorde,
Comme ta douce merveille
Emmoncelle par milliers
Un grand peuple d'écoliers
Que tu tires par l'oreille.

(I, 126-128)

This ode might be described as Ronsard's expression of the public gratitude for Dorat's inspired teaching. His non-Pindaric ode XIV reveals the depth of his private friendship and gratitude, as well as his pride in having assimilated to good poetic purpose the teaching of such a master:

Puissai-je entonner un vers
Qui raconte à l'univers
Ton los porté sus son aile,
Et combien je fu heureus
Suçer le laict savoureus
De ta feconde mammelle.

Sur ma langue doucement
Tu mis au commencement,
Je ne sçai quelles merveilles,
Que vulgaires je randi,[43]
Et premier les épandi
Dans les Françoises oreilles.

Si en mes vers tu ne vois
Sinon le miel de ma vois
Versé pour ton los repaistre:
Qui m'en oseroit blámer?
Le disciple doit aimer
Vanter & louer son maistre...

Si j'ai du bruit il n'est mien,
Je le confesse estre tien
Dont la science hautaine
Tout alteré me treuva,
Et bien jeune m'abreuva
De l'une & l'autre fontaine.[44]

(I, 135-137).

[43] «Que j'exprimai le premier en langue vulgaire, en français.» Note by Laumonier.

[44] Greek and Latin literature.

Dorat rivals with Ronsard in the magnanimity of his reply to both of his student's odes by asserting that he had contributed nothing to his advancement: «[tu n'as] d'autre initiateur, d'autre maître que toi-même, Pierre.» But there was more to Dorat's reply than magnanimity, gracious as that was. Geneviève Demerson (p. 23) makes the important point that the master's two odes to his disciple were of immediate value to a Ronsard beleaguered by critics unable to digest his audacious novelties. «En composant ces deux poèmes dédiés à Ronsard (IV et V) le professeur entend non seulement louer son disciple, mais bien plutôt l'expliquer à ses lecteurs, donner aux audaces du jeune homme la garantie d'un humaniste sérieux. Sans les nommer, il s'oppose ainsi aux rimeurs courtisans pauvres d'inspiration, et il expose ce qu'est la grande poésie, celle qui est un don des dieux et qui peut, seule, faire survivre les princes...»

It is not difficult to imagine the effect produced on the entrenched defenders of the traditional forms, as well as on those who hesitated between the old and the new poetics, when they read at the end of the first, second, and third editions of the *Quatre premiers livres des Odes* the prelude of Dorat's Latin Pindaric ode to Ronsard with its vibrant imitation of the overture of the second Olympian: «Camènes qui régnez sur la lyre, allons, quel dieu, quel héros, quel homme réclame que son nom soit uni à vos cordes? On a déjà assez parlé de Pise et de l'Olympe qui appartiennent à Jupiter, et aussi des augustes travaux d'Hercule, père de notre nation. Mais maintenant, c'est le prince de la lyre nationale, en grand renom auprès des peuples de la France, qu'il nous convient de célébrer par le chant de Pindare, qu'il a fait sien, en lui dédiant ce poème: par mes vers latins, je lui témoignerai ma reconnaissance et prendrai ma revanche» (trans. Geneviève Demerson, p. 54).

The effect produced by these lines could only have been intensified when the coterie hostile to the new poetry read the version of the same overture in the first Pindaric ode addressed by Ronsard to Henri II:

> Muse, bande ton arc dous,
> Muse ma douce esperance,
> Quel Prince fraperons nous,
> L'enfonçant parmi la France?
> Sera-ce pas nostre Roi,
> Duquel la divine oreille
> Humera cette merveille
> Qui n'obeist qu'à ma loi?
> (I, 62-63)

The friendship thus established between the humanist-poet and the poet-humanist, on the basis of a deeply shared admiration for Greek literature in general and for the odes of Pindar in particular, never faltered. Even the suppression in 1555 of Ronsard's ode XIV to Dorat (inc. *Puissai-je entonner*

un vers), far from indicating a rift between master and former student, reveals Ronsard's recognition that certain verses of that ode (19-24, 31-36, 43-48), contrary to its announced intention of eulogizing Dorat, exhibited too strong a tendency toward overly complacent and rather resounding self-congratulation. Laumonier's explanation seems to assert much the same thing: «... le temps était passé des violences et des rodomontades, dont le besoin ne se faisait plus sentir une fois la cause gagnée» (VII, p. vi). Perhaps no better proof of the enduring nature of the friendship between Ronsard and Dorat can be found than the fact that in an *Odelette à Corydon* (VI, 174-176), out of a group of individuals invited by the poet to a rather bibulous «festin» (vv. 19-24), the name of Dorat is the only one that survived throughout all the variations of the successive editions.

Ronsard's career as a poet begins with allusions to «l'étude pareille, la longue frequentation» between himself and Du Bellay, and to the adoption of the Pindaric ode as the supreme prototype of lyric poetry composed for the victors in the Olympian and other Games. In his last year and in one of his last poems to Jean Galland, the friend of his declining days who was to be one of his literary executors, the image of the Games is still present to his mind.

«Il fit faire un coche», Claude Binet wrote, «pour s'en retourner [à Croixval] en la compagnie dudict Galland, sans lequel il ne pouvoit vivre, l'appelant ordinairement sa seconde ame, comme il declare assez en ce fragment qu'il n'a pu achever, prevenu de mort:

Galland ma seconde ame, Atrebatique race,[45]
Encor que nos ayeux aynt emmuré la place
De nos villes bien loing, la tienne pres d'Arras,
La mienne pres Vandosme...
Cela n'empesche point que les trois belles Graces,
L'honneur, & la vertu, n'ourdissent le lien
Qui serre de si pres mon cœur avec le tien.
Heureux qui peut trouver pour passer l'avanture
De ce Monde, un amy de gentille nature
Comme tu es, Galland, en qui les cieux ont mis
Tout le parfaict requis aux plus parfaicts amis.
Ja mon soir s'embrunit, & desja ma journée
Fuit vers son Occident à demy retournée.
La Parque ne me veult ny me peut secourir:
Encore ta carriere est bien longue à courir,
Ta vie est en sa course, et d'une forte haleine
Et d'un pied vigoureux tu fais jallir l'areine
Sous tes pas, aussi fort que quelque bon guerrier
Le sablon Ælean,[46] pour pris du Laurier.
(XVIII, 291-292)

[45] «Natif d'Arras. *Atrebates* est l'ancien nom de la ville d'Arras.» Note by Laumonier.

[46] An allusion to the Olympian games in Elis; cf. II, 5, v. 4; III, 108, vv. 187-192; VIII, 309, v. 358.

IV. «The secure foundation of states»: Hesiod, Pindar, and Ronsard on Justice

«Pindare est le chantre infatigable de la justice... chez tous les héros, quelle que soit leur patrie, la justice est une des vertus qu'il aime le plus à célébrer. Il loue Damagète de Rhodes cher à la justice [Ol., VII, 17]... 'Le bonheur que la justice n'accompagne pas est réservé à une fin funeste' [Isth., VII, 47-48]. Quand un homme a vécu dans la pratique de la justice, 'son cœur, dit Pindare, est réchauffé par l'espérance...' [frag. 214, p. 610]» (Croiset, p. 233).

One would not expect Pindar, the aristocrat, to have much in common with Hesiod, shepherd and farmer of the country town of Ascra in Boeotia, whose *Works and Days*, the poetry of peasant life, is worthy to stand beside the heroic epics of Homer. Though Pindar and Hesiod were both Boeotians, their world, to a superficial view, might appear to be separated by an impassable social abyss. This was not the case when Hesiod was writing, perhaps in the eighth century B.C. «It is... important to discover what share the common people took in developing the aristocratic ideals [of Homer] into a cultural pattern which covered the whole nation. The answer to this question lies in the fact that the country was not yet conquered by the city... At that time even the cities (especially those of mainland Greece) were principally country-towns... There was in the countryside a steady growth of native morality, and thought, and faith, a crop as constant as the grass and grain which every field produced, and as truly native to the soil» (*Paideia*, I, 59-60).

Thus, on certain fundamental questions of ethics the views of a Pindar and a Hesiod might be and were similar.[47] A reciprocity of influence prevailed between nobility and peasantry. «Just as the culture of the nobility affects every class of society when its spiritual energy is intensified by Homer, so the ideals of the peasant, interpreted by Hesiod, reach far beyond the narrow frontiers of peasant life» (*Paideia*, I, 74). And, one may add, beyond the spatial and temporal limits of ancient Greece, to touch the aristocracy of Renaissance France, through the writings of the greatest poet of that period, after two millennia and at the other end of the European continent.[48]

To understand the ethical attitudes of Ronsard, therefore, especially insofar as the Greek concept of justice is concerned, it does not suffice to

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[47] See Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 27, 90-91, 103; Duchemin, p. 22. — «The claim that Hesiod *introduced* the ideal of justice, though reiterated by many respected authorities, must be rejected.» Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1971), p. 35 (emphasis in text).

[48] See, for example, Ronsard's *La Salade*, XV, 83, vv. 141-148.

relate them solely to Pindar's views on that subject, for one is inevitably attracted through Pindar into the spiritual orbit of his fellow countryman[49] who, centuries earlier, had laid some of the moral foundations on which the Theban poet was to build. But there is more to it than that. Ronsard, in addition to the ethical postulates that he acquired from his reading of the triumphal odes, experienced a deepening comprehension of the idea of justice by his independent encounter with Hesiod's *Works and Days*.[50] That is not to say, of course, that Ronsard's ethical personality was determined in every or most respects by Pindar and Hesiod. He had read many of the classical authors and the Old and New Testaments, as well as the French and Italian writers, and each had no doubt contributed to his enrichment. But most of all, he had lived a very full life, with eyes and mind and heart attentive to both the noble and ignoble and frankly atrocious events of his time. He had drawn from them moral lessons ever more profound, even though his acts sometimes fell grievously away from the standards implicit in what he had read and in the conclusions he had drawn from the swarming events at Court and in society in general. The sensitive spirit of the poet could not fail to reflect on and ultimately to fuse his experience of the world and of the equally real world of books.

«It was Hesiod who introduced the ideal which served as a focus for all these different elements [of peasant life] and made it possible to concentrate them into the epic form — the ideal of Justice. Out of his fight for his own rights against his brother's aggrandisement[51] and the corruption of the judges, was born the passionate faith in justice which inspires his most personal peom, the *Works and Days*» (*Paideia*, I, 62). «When Hesiod succeeded Homer,[52] he defined once and for all the creative power of poetry... in its

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[49] There is a striking example of this attraction in Ronsard's ode *A Joachim du Bellai Angevin* (inc. *Nous avons quelque fois grand' faute*), where, as Laumonier points out in a note, Ronsard (II, 38, vv. 43-45), on the basis of several allusions in Pindar to the Gigantomachy, attributes to him the narrative of that legendary war which in reality is recounted in the *Theogony* of Hesiod. — Most instrumental in leading Ronsard into this confusion may have been his recollection of the casting of Typhon into Tartarus by Zeus in the first Pythian ode, perhaps the most significant symbol in Pindar of the victory of cosmic harmony and the establishment of the reign of universal moral law over the forces of evil and anarchy.

[50] See *RGE*, Chap. XVIII.

[51] By attempting to appropriate more than his share of their inheritance.

[52] «Homer is the oldest source of such ideas known to us. In him we find the first eulogy of justice, although in the *Iliad* that ideal is less pronounced than in the *Odyssey*, which is nearer to Hesiod in time. In him we see the belief that the gods are the guardians of justice, and that their rule would not be truly divine if they did not make justice victorious over injustice in the end. That postulate governs the whole plot of the *Odyssey*. Even in the *Iliad*, a famous simile in the *Patrocleia* contains the belief that Zeus sends storms from heaven when men distort justice upon the earth [XVI, 384-393]. But a vast distance separates these occa-

socially constructive and cultural sense. That power... springs from the poet's determination to find the true nature of things — a determination which is founded on his deep understanding of all his world... Hesiod perceived that the existence of the old social order was endangered by strife and injustice. And through that perception he came to see the inviolable foundations on which the life of his society and of each of his fellow-men was built» (*Paideia*, I, 74-75).

The truth that Hesiod sought, the only truth that could bring tranquillity to the strife-torn society of his time, was Justice between nobility and peasantry and between man and man.

«What, then, is justice?» M.P. Nilsson asks. «The answer can be given in one word. For the Greeks, justice was the retribution which counters wrongdoing» (*Greek Piety*, p. 35).[53]

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sional traces of an ethical conception of the gods, and even the faith which governs the *Odyssey*, from the religious passion of Hesiod, the herald of justice, the simple man of the people whose infrangible trust in Zeus' guardianship of justice makes him stand out against the men of his own time, and still, after thousands of years, strikes us to the heart with its pathos and its power» (*Paideia*, I, 68-69).

[53] JEAN FRAPPIER ON THEOLOGICAL AND RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE IN RONSARD'S *HYMNE DE LA JUSTICE*. In his article on Ronsard's *Hymne de la Justice* (below, n. 71) Jean Frappier (p. 104) offers a different definition of justice based on his conviction that the poem is «un hymne théologique dans un cadre humaniste. Car cette Justice célébrée par Rosnard n'est pas la simple équité; elle est une idée divine antérieure aux sociétés humaines. Elle est la justice originelle, la grâce originelle, l'état d'innocence où Adam a été créé. Cette vertu ou cette grâce qui fait l'homme juste, le Juste au sens biblique du mot, consiste essentiellement dans le respect de la loi divine et des devoirs de la religion, et non précisément dans le respect du droit d'autrui, selon l'idée courante de la justice. *C'est bien cette conception de la justice originelle qui commande tout l'hymne* [my emphasis]; sans doute voit-on apparaître dans sa dernière partie (vers 480 et suiv.) l'éloge de la justice, comprise au sens banal du mot, indispensable à l'ordre de la société qui doit refléter l'harmonie du monde, mais il n'y a là aucune contradiction, car il va de soi que la justice originelle englobe la conception de la justice sociale et de l'équité.» Jean Frappier adds in note 21 that «il suffit d'ouvrir le Littré pour apprendre, si on l'ignore, que *justice*, comme terme de théologie, signifie: 'la justification que Dieu met dans l'âme par sa grâce', la justification étant le rétablissement du pécheur dans l'état d'innocence».

In the fourth chapter of her *Cinq Hymnes de Ronsard* (p. 88) Germaine Lafeuille has shown with numerous examples that in Ronsard's poems preceding the *Hymne de la Justice* «l'image qui revient fréquemment est celle de la peine poursuivant le crime... Or le schéma profond de l'hymne, sous la succession légende des âges, procès de paradis, institution du Prince, *est essentiellement 'crime et châtiment'*» [my emphasis].

This theme dominates far more than the latter part of the hymn. The very considerable portions inspired by Hesiod and Aratus, neither of whom could have known the meaning of justice in the theological sense as defined by Frappier, are an affirmation of society's imperative dependence on retributive justice. It is not enough to say that «il va de soi que la justice originelle englobe la conception de la justice sociale et de l'équité». Social justice, which is retributive in its nature, must, in order to have any meaning, be independently operative in every society, for there are societies in which the theological definition of justice does not find acceptance.

It is a curious irony that in a hymn which supposedly celebrates the *theological* concept of

Justice is one of the two profoundly co-ordinate themes of the *Works and Days*. The other is in the first word of the title — work. «Il y a dans l'homme un instinct de lutte (ἔρις) qui veut être satisfait. S'il est dirigé vers le travail, il devient une émulation féconde et heureuse; s'il se tourne vers la violence, il est la perte de l'homme. Dès lors, le seul moyen de rester juste, c'est de travailler. Donc *travaille pour rester juste*: les deux thèmes, *travail* et *justice*, en réalité n'en font qu'un.»[54] This is the substance of Hesiod's repeated admonitions to his brother Perses who sought to defraud him by bribing the judges. The admonition is universalized at the end of a passage containing practical advice on good management in husbandry: «If your heart within you desires wealth, do these things and work with work upon work» (381-382).

Adherence to this precept would guard society against unjust acquisition: «Wealth should not be seized: god-given wealth is much better; for if a man take great wealth violently and perforce, or if he steal it through his tongue... the gods soon blot him out and make that man's house low...» (320-325). Was it a recollection of this reference to the wiles of crafty speech that led Pindar to put these words in the mouth of Jason as he addressed Pelias, the usurper of his kingdom: «... the minds of mortals are only too swift to praise crafty gain rather than justice, even although they are moving toward a rude reckoning...»? (Pyth., IV, 139-140). «For the man who gives willingly», Hesiod says elsewhere in the *Works and Days*, «even though he gives a great thing, rejoices in his gift and is glad in heart; but whoever gives way to shamelessness and takes something himself, even though it be a small thing, it freezes his heart» (357-360). The same reflections on injustice followed by

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justice, it is the Cardinal de Lorraine, to whom the hymn is dedicated, who is chosen, in his address to Henri II, to advance the cause of *retributive* justice. It is equally ironic that a hymn presumably consecrated to the interpretation of «cette grâce qui fait l'homme juste, le Juste au sens biblique du mot», should appear, in Frappier's words, «irrémédiablement gâté... par une flatterie hyperbolique» (p. 97) of the Cardinal, «une vertigineuse flatterie de poète courtisan» (p. 107; cf. *RGL*, Part I, pp. 353-369); that in a poem dictated by the lofty motives that Frappier finds in it, «la flatterie semble friser l'impiété, ou, pour le moins, altérer la pureté de l'inspiration religieuse en même temps qu'elle verse dans le mauvais goût» (p. 107); finally, that the divinity, Justice-Dike, half Christian, half Hellenic, should be ordered by her father, DIEU-Jupiter, to become incarnate (vv. 402-434) in the Cardinal whom «Ronsard, estompant la figure du Christ, n'est pas loin de représenter comme un Rédempteur (vers 375-434)» (p. 104), indeed, whom the poet, «n'hésitait pas à... transformer en une sorte de Messie... (p. 106). «N'est-ce pas à Michel de l'Hospital que ce poème devait être dédié? — Ironie de la justice: la puissance du jour était ce Prince de Lorraine — ni divin, ni saint, ni juste, tant s'en faut — mais on aime à croire que c'est au chancelier que Ronsard pensait, et que c'est de sa bouche qu'il avait appris la beauté de la Justice» (Germaine Lafeuille, *op. cit.*, p. 116, n. 30).

[54] Paul Mazon, ed. and tr., *Hésiode: Théogonie, Les Travaux et les Jours, Le Bouclier* (1951), p. 72 (emphasis in text). Cf. *Paideia*, I, 64: «The connecting link is the leit-motiv of the whole work — the connection between righteousness and work [*WD*, 298-316].»

retribution are expressed in Pindar's eighth Pythian ode in somewhat similar language: «Gain is best, whenever one getteth it from the home of a willing giver. But violence overthroweth the braggart at the last» (13-15).

More than once Hesiod has been compared with his contemporary Amos. «Ambedue di origine campagnuola e dotati di spirito sinceramente religioso,[55] dànno espressione nei loro scritti alle più profonde e sane aspirazioni del loro popolo...: Esiodo, che esorta il fratello al lavoro e i giudici alla giustizia, e insegna mezzi per procacciarsi un onesto guadagno; Amos, che proclama alto il buon diritto dei poveri e dei lavoratori ed eleva la loro causa a significato generale di difesa della giustizia.»[56] Nilsson, however, discerned an essential difference in the motivating principle of each of these poets, and indeed of each of the civilizations to which they belonged, when he wrote: «Both quiver with a passion for justice,[57] but there is a great difference between their expressions of it. Hesiod's Zeus is not Amos' Yahweh, the jealous god whose very nature is justice and whose wrath smites and punishes the unjust. Zeus had long been, and still is in Hesiod, the champion of justice; his eyes see everything and notice everything; he fixes a penalty for the haughty who commit wickedness and shameful deeds, but since Zeus sat enthroned in the far distance, the result is that his intervention lacks the force and obviousness which characterize that of Amos' Yahweh... To Amos justice is the very kernel of divine activity, to Hesiod it is the foundation on which human society rests, given and protected by Zeus. For Amos, justice belongs to the sphere of deity, for Hesiod, to the human sphere, although it is under divine protection.»[58]

Even if one grants the validity of this distinction, as I believe one must, there are moments when it loses some of the sharpness of outline that Nilsson gives it.[59] Yet it is true that Hesiod's vision of Justice is oriented toward society. This impression emerges clearly from his several references to the baneful consequences for the state that flow from the actions of unjust prin-

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[55] See Amos, VIII, 14, 15; Hesiod *Theogony*, 22-34.

[56] P. Giovanni Rinaldi, C.R.S., «Saggio storico-religioso sul profeta Amos», *Aevum*, XXIII (1944), 316-317. Cf. Frederick J. Teggart, «The Argument of Hesiod's *Works and Days*», *Journal of the History of Ideas*, VIII (1947), 60-67.

[57] Amos, V, 12; *WD*, 38-39, 221, 264; Amos, VIII, 4; *WD*, 248-264, 320-334.

[58] *Greek Piety*, pp. 34-35. Cf. the same author's *A History of Greek Religion*, p. 130: «A better developed ethical sense elevated Zeus to an expression for the moral consciousness; at his side was set Dike, Justice, as his daughter and assistant. The needs of social life forced these functions upon the old Nature gods.»

[59] See, for instance, *WD*, 174-201, the description of the men of the Age of Iron; 220-224, Justice driven out by bribe-devouring judges; 248-264, the warning to princes who oppress their people with crooked judgments; 327-334, censure of those who wrong suppliants or guests, who are unjust to a brother or father, or to orphaned children.

ces.[60] «When Hesiod identifies the will of Zeus with the concept of justice, when he creates a new divinity, the goddess Diké, and sets her close beside Zeus the highest of all gods, he is inspired by the burning religious and moral enthusiasm with which the rising class of peasants and townsfolk hailed the new ideal of Justice the saviour» (*Paideia*, I, 69). «Upon that old natural peasant world of country life and labour he bases his ideal of justice, on which in turn he founds the whole structure of society» (*Paideia*, I, 73).

In 464 B.C., when Pindar was commissioned to celebrate the athletic victories of Xenophon of Corinth, the prelude of his ode, the thirteenth Olympian, was a glorification of Law, Justice, and Peace as the defenders of the stability of the state: «While I laud a house, thrice victor at Olympia, gentle to her own citizens, and kindly to strangers, I shall take knowledge of prosperous Corinth, portal of Isthmian Poseidon, glorious with her noble youths. Within her walls dwelleth Law [Eunomia], and her sisters, the firm-set foundation of cities, even Justice [Dike] and Peace [Eirene] that is fostered beside her, those guardians of wealth for men, the golden daughters of Themis, who excelleth in counsel...» (1-8). Of the three daughters of Themis, it is Dike who embodies the principle upon which the security of the social order rests. Hesiod had recognized the primacy of Dike in his allusions to her in the *Works and Days*, especially in the passage in which she takes her place beside her father Zeus (256-262).[61] Of this Pindar was surely aware, although in the prelude of Olympian XIII he was probably reminded of the lines in Hesiod's *Theogony* (901-902), in which the three personified sisters are named together: «Next he [Zeus] married bright Themis who bare the Horae (Hours), Eunomia (Order), Diké (Justice), and blooming Eirene (Peace)...»

The eighth Pythian for Aristomenes of Aegina begins with an apostrophe to Peace (Hesuchia)[62] in which the Hesiodic association of Justice with the stability of the state is once more present: «Kindly Goddess of Peace, daughter of Justice, that makest cities great; thou that holdest the master-keys, of councils and of wars, receive from Aristomenes the honour due for a Pythian victory; for thou knowest with perfect fitness the secret of gentleness, both in giving, and in taking. And yet, whenever any man hurleth into his heart relentless wrath, rudely confronting the strength of thine enemies, thou plungest Insolence in the brine» (1-12).

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[60] *WD*, 38, 222, 240, 248, 262-264.

[61] See also vv. 220, 278-279, 283.

[62] «Εἰρήνη (peace between state and state) is the sister of Δίκη (O., 13, 7), but Ἡσυχία, domestic tranquillity, is eminently the daughter of right between man and man.» Gildersleeve, pp. 327-328.

In the *Ode de la Paix* Ronsard remembered this passage of the eighth Pythian with its ancient reflections, originating in Hesiod, on Peace, who as the daughter of Justice and a descendant of Themis and Zeus, holds nations in her safekeeping:

> O Paix heureuse,
> Tu es la garde vigoureuse
> Des peuples, & de leurs cités:
> Des roiaumes les clefs tu portes,
> Tu ouvres des villes les portes,
> Serenant leurs adversités.
> Bien qu'un prince voulust darder
> Les flots armés de son orage,
> Et tu le viennes regarder,
> Ton œil appaise son courage.[63]
> (III, 23-24)

The *Works and Days* begins with an apostrophe to the Muses followed by what is virtually a hymn to the omnipotence of Zeus and to his supreme role in the administration of universal justice: «Muses of Pieria who give glory through song, come hither, tell of Zeus your father and chant his praise. Through him mortal men are famed or unfamed, sung or unsung alike, as great Zeus wills. For easily he makes strong, and easily he brings the strong man low; easily he humbles the proud and raises the obscure, and easily he straightens the crooked and blasts the proud, — Zeus who thunders aloft and has his dwelling most high. Attend thou with eye and ear, and make judgements straight with righteousness. And I, Perses, would tell of true things» (1-10).

In the same eighth Pythian whose prelude is a tribute to Peace and Justice, we find a passage on the omnipotence of God in which the Hesiodic tonality is clearly audible: «... victory doth not depend on men alone; but he that giveth is God [δαίμων], who, at one while, exalteth on high, and, at another, bringeth one below the level of his hands» (76-78).[64]

The *Hymne de la Justice*, where one would naturally expect to find them, does not contain verses closely resembling these of either Hesiod or Pindar. In the hymn to Henri II, however, which immediately precedes the *Hymne de la Justice* and was published together with it in 1555, we read

> Ce grand DIEU[65] bien souvent des Princes l'apareil
> Tranche au meilieu du fait, & leur rompt le conseil,
> Les uns font en un an, ou deux, leurs entreprises,
> Des autres à-neant les affaires sont mises,

[63] See *POR*, pp. 86-87, for a comparison of the texts of Pindar and Ronsard.

[64] Cf. Isth., III, 4-6.

[65] It is clear from the context that Jupiter is intended.

Et tout cela qu'ilz ont pensé songneusement,
Par ne sçay quel Destin leur succede autrement...
(VIII, 26)

But in the hymn to Henri II Ronsard's principal purpose was eulogy; it is entirely in his manner to transfer to the king of France, in the verses that follow without interval, the attributes of the supreme deity of the Greek pantheon:

Mais les petis pensers venus en souvenance
De nostre Roy sont faits aussi tost qu'ils les pense,
Quant à ceux qui sont grandz, si les pense au matin,
Pour le moins vers le soir il en aura la fin.
Tant Jupiter l'estime, & tant il est prospere
Aux courageux dessains que son cœur delibere.
(*Ibid.*)

«Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end», says the Psalmist (VII, 9), «but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth [scrutans] the hearts and the reins.»

One of the most significant themes, several times repeated, of the *Works and Days*, is that of the penetrating vision, material and intellectual, of Zeus: «The eye of Zeus, seeing all [πάντα ἰδὼν] and understanding all [πάντα νοήσας], beholds these [evil] things too, if so he will, and fails not to mark what sort of justice is this that the city keeps within it» (267-269). «But for those who practice violence and cruel deeds far-seeing [εὐρύοπα][66] Zeus, the son of Cronos, ordains a punishment» (238-239).

In the surviving poetry of Pindar there are many allusions to Zeus as the «all powerful father of gods and men»,[67] including two occurrences of the epithet favored by Hesiod, εὐρύοπα. These are found in the sixth and eighth Paeans,[68] but not in verses relating to justice. Ronsard could not have known them in any event, since these Paeans were not discovered until relatively recent times.[69] But his reading of so many passages in both Hesiod and Pindar, as well as in Homer, on the grandeur of Zeus, had enabled him to share their sense of the majesty of the god of the sky and their assurance of his vigilant observance of the actions of men.

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[66] This description of Zeus occurs again in *WD*, 229, 281; cf. 252-255: «For upon the bounteous earth Zeus has thrice ten thousand spirits, watchers of mortal men, and these keep watch on judgements and deeds of wrong as they roam, clothed in mist, all over the earth.»

[67] See Slater, p. 219, col. 2.

[68] Sandys, p. 542, v. 134; p. 544, v. 25.

[69] The texts were published by Grenfell and Hunt, *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, V (1908), pp. 20, 41 f., 93, 64 f., according to Sandys, *loc. cit.*

In the *Hymne de la Justice* the Age of Silver, following upon the Golden Age, witnesses a decline in the ethical values of mankind. The divinity, Justice, goes into voluntary banishment from the cities, in which her presence has become an unwelcome impediment to the wilfull demoralization of the inhabitants and an oppression to herself:

Les hommes ne preschoit, mais vestant une nue,
Et jettant un grand cry, des villes s'en vola,[70]
Et seule dans les bois loing de gens s'en alla:
Car elle dedaignoit de plus hanter personne,
Regrettant des premiers la vie saincte & bonne.
Aussi tost que la nuict les ombres amenoit,
Elle quittoit les boys, & pleurante venoit
Crier sur le sommet des villes les plus hautes,
Pour effroyer le peuple, & reprendre ses fautes,
Tousjours le menaçant qu'il ne la voiroit plus,
Et qu'elle s'en iroit à son Pere lassus.
«L'œil de DIEU,[71] ce disois, toutes choses regarde,
«Il voit tout,[72] il sçait tout, & sur tout il prend garde...
(VIII, 52)

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[70] Cf. VIII, 57; IX, 23, 109.

[71] JEAN FRAPPIER ON JUPITER, DIEU, JEHOVAH, IN RONSARD'S *HYMNE DE LA JUSTICE*. In his article on «L'Inspiration biblique et théologique de Ronsard dans *L'Hymne de la Justice*», a masterpiece of ingenious argument (*Mél. Chamard*, pp. 97-108), the late Jean Frappier stated (p. 103), that «le Dieu de Ronsard, sous l'aspect de Jupiter ou celui de Jéhovah, restait évidemment le Dieu catholique», and (p. 104), that «Ronsard, ne désignant qu'une seule fois le Dieu Suprême par le nom de Jupiter, a fait preuve de plus de discrétion que beaucoup de ses contemporains...» In fact, the name of Jupiter occurs three times in the *Hymne de la Justice* (vv. 235, 468, 471) and it is open to question whether or not the notion of «Dieu Suprême» accompanies each mention. On the other hand, it is incontestable that DIEU occurs in a score of passages in the *Hymne*. Here too, however, it is arguable whether that fact has any probative power for assessing either Ronsard's discretion or his Catholicism. As Frappier points out (note 15), «Après avoir parlé comme Jéhovah, Dieu a le fameux froncement de sourcils du maître de l'Olympe (vers 305-306)». Again, in vv. 345-347:

Quand Themis la devine, au bas du trosne alla
De DIEU presque appaisé, auquel ainsi parla.
O souverain Seigneur, roy des dieux, & des hommes...

it is Jupiter-Zeus whom we recognize in DIEU, while in vv. 465-466:

MOISE premierement aprist les loix de DIEU,
Pour les graver au cœur du populaire Hebrieu...

it is to Jehovah that Ronsard refers.

Obviously his many allusions to DIEU (and several to Dieux) in the *Hymne de la Justice* are not without inconsistencies which complicate any effort to establish his religious position at that time on any firm basis. A note by Paul Laumonier (VIII, 59, n. 2) seems to me very significant for such an effort: «Jusqu'à ce vers [235] Ronsard avait dit Dieu. Avec Jupiter et les Dieux [in vv. 235 and 236], nous voici revenus au paganisme et à l'Olympe homérique. Mais il lui arrivera de dire plus loin Dieu pour Jupiter et on en trouvera la raison aux vers 473 et suiv.» These verses are:

Car Jupiter, Pallas, Apollon, sont les noms
Que le seul DIEU reçoit en meintes nations
Pour ses divers effectz que l'on ne peut comprendre,
Si par mille surnoms on ne les fait entendre.

Frappier quotes this passage (p. 103) and adds (note 13) that it is «à rapprocher du passage

In Hesiod there is nothing voluntary about the exile of Justice, for it takes place in the ruthless Age of Iron, not in the gentler Silver Age to which Ronsard has transposed it: «There is a noise when Justice is being dragged in the way where those who devour bribes and give sentence with crooked judgements, take her. And she, wrapped in mist, follows to the city and the haunts of the people, weeping, and bringing mischief to men, even to such as have driven her forth in that they did not deal straightly with her» (*WD*, 220-224).[73]

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qu'on lit au début de l'*Abbregé de l'Art Poétique* (1565): '... la Poësie n'estoit au premier age qu'une Theologie allegorique, pour faire entrer au cerveau des hommes grossiers, par fables plaisantes et colorées, les secrets qu'ils ne pouvoient comprendre, quand trop ouvertement on descouvroit la vérité.'» It might have been more appropriate to quote the following more truly parallel lines from the same *Art Poétique* (XIV, p. 6): «Car les Muses, Apollon, Mercure, Pallas & autres telles deitez ne nous representent autre chose que les puissances de Dieu, auquel les premiers hommes avoyent donné plusieurs noms pour les divers effectz de son incomprehensible majesté.» (Cf. R. Lebègue, *L.*, VIII, 369, 3e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*, who quotes these lines and cites, in addition, XVI, 345). — See also Croiset, 188-189, for Pindar's sense of the unity of the divine underlying the polytheistic pluralism of Greek mythology. Cf. James Adam, *The Religious Teachers of Greece*, pp. 122-123.

Frappier need not, however, have gone outside of the first book of *Hymnes* to find a passage very revealing of Ronsard's religious position in the year in which he wrote the *Hymne de la Justice*. It is at the end of the *Hymne du Ciel*:

> Sois sainct de quelque nom que tu voudras, ô Pere,
> A qui de l'Univers la nature obtempere,
> Aimantin, varié, azuré, tournoyant,
> Filz de Saturne, Roy treshaut, & tout voyant,
> CIEL, grand Palais de DIEU...

I have no doubt that at the outbreak of the religious wars Ronsard polemicized sincerely on behalf of Catholicism as the surest means of maintaining the unity of the kingdom. But in 1555, in the *Hymnes*, and again in 1565, in the *Art Poétique*, he seems to me to have adopted an attitude that can justly be described as ecumenical.

[72] Cf. VIII, 149, v. 116: «Filz de Saturne, Roy treshaut, & tout voyant» quoted in the preceding note; 254, v. 135: «Je te salu' Deesse [Eternité] au grand œil tout-voyant.» More frequent in the *Hymne de la Justice* are allusions to the omnipotence of DIEU-Jupiter: p. 58, v. 205 (var. of 1578-1587); p. 69, v. 477; p. 70, v. 511.

[73] On v. 120 of the *Hymne de la Justice* Laumonier's note states that «Dans tout ce passage, depuis le vers 49, Ronsard, bien qu'il s'inspire par endroits d'Hésiode, a paraphrasé Aratos, *Phénom.*, vers 96 à 136...» Aratus has retained the general structure of Hesiod's account of the Golden and Silver Ages and the description of the presence of Justice among men. Missing from Aratus, however, are Ronsard's allusions to Pandora (v. 52), to Justice veiling herself in mist (v. 84), and weeping over the injustices committed in the Silver Age (v. 90). For these see respectively *WD*, 57-105, 223, 222. — In the *Elegie à Mademoiselle de Chasteaubrun* of 1565 (XIII, 180, vv. 67-70) Ronsard remembered this passage of the *Works and Days*, but Justice has been replaced by the personified «vertus» who, weeping, abandon «ce monde vitieux» for their refuge in heaven.

V. The Hawk and the Nightingale: Justice Violated

Perhaps enough has been said in the preceding pages to show how much Ronsard's concept of justice owed to both Pindar and Hesiod.[74] But there were moments, in the greatly different circumstances that governed the relationships of society in their respective times, when their hopes for the survival of Justice were very nearly extinguished.

When Hesiod seems almost to despair of the possibility of justice among men, we hear most poignantly the voice of his passionate attachment to it: «Then, would that I were not among the men of the fifth generation, but either had died before or been born afterwards. For now truly is a race of iron, and men never rest from labour and sorrow by day, and from perishing by night; and the gods shall lay sore troubles upon them. But, notwithstanding, even these shall have some good mingled with their evils. And Zeus will destroy this race of mortal men also when they come to have grey hair upon the temples at their birth. The father will not agree with his children, nor the children with their father, nor guest with his host, nor comrade with comrade; nor will brother be dear to brother as aforetime. Men will dishonour their parents as they grow quickly old, and will carp at them, chiding them with bitter words, hard-hearted they, not knowing the fear of the gods. They will not repay their aged parents the cost of their nurture, for might shall be their right: and one man will sack another's city. There will be no favour for the man who keeps his oath or for the just or for the good; but rather men will praise the evil-doer and his violent dealing. Strength will be right and reverence will cease to be; and the wicked will hurt the worthy man, speaking false words against him, and will swear an oath upon them. Envy, foul-mouthed, delighting in evil, with scowling face, will go along with wretched men one and all. And then Aidos and Nemesis, with their sweet forms wrapped in white robes, will go from the wide-pathed earth and forsake mankind to join the company of the deathless gods: and bitter sorrows will be left for mortal men, and there will be no help against evil» (*WD*, 174-201).

Aidos is regard for others, a sense of shame and of honor, above all, of reverence for the gods and one's parents; Nemesis is the spirit of retribution upon the wicked who enjoy undeserved prosperity. «Positively and negatively», as Fränkel says (p. 121), «the two conceptions describe the feeling for moral values and for the sanctity of justice. This feeling is prerequisite for any kind of order, and when it is gone there is no hope left».

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[74] For a more detailed account of Hesiod's influence on the *Hymne de la Justice* see *RGE*, pp. 336-340.

The belief in the sanctity of justice was as much alive in Pindar the aristocrat as it was in the peasant Hesiod. In the ninth Nemean he utters this prayer: «O father Zeus... bestow on the men of Aetna the blessing of righteous laws... There, as thou knowest, there are heroes who have souls superior to wealth. My words are hard to believe; for honour [αἰδὼς] is secretly beguiled by greed, honour that bringeth renown» (29-34). Just as in the *Works and Days* Aidos and Nemesis withdraw from the iniquitous society of men among whom a father is set against his children and brother against brother, so in the fourth Pythian we find this sensitive thought: «... if any feud befall men of the same kin, the Fates withdraw to hide their shame [αἰδῶ καλύψαι]» (145-146).[75] For Pindar one of the indications of the blessedness of the life of the Hyperboreans is that «aloof from toil and conflict, they dwell afar from the wrath of Nemesis».[76]

Hesiod wishes to convince his brother that men may indeed aspire to rise above considerations of greed and wealth, that «Zeus has given man justice, which is his patent of nobility, so that he shall not live like the wild beasts who devour one another, because there is no justice among them save the right of the stronger».[77] To this end he recounts the fable of the hawk and the nightingale, which is intended not alone for Perses, but for rulers possessed of understanding (202).

The hawk has seized and carried aloft the nightingale, who weeps when she is pierced by the claws of the bird of prey. «Miserable thing», the hawk says, «why do you cry out? One far stronger than you now holds you fast... He is a fool who tries to withstand the stronger...» (203-210). The fable is the representation in plastic form of the «moral» twice announced in the preceding verses: «might shall be their right» (189), «strength will be right» (192).

Pindar need not, of course, have been thinking of these verses or of Hesiod's fable when he wrote the ninth Nemean ode, but the «moral» is the same. The ode refers to the sedition of Amphiaraus who killed Talaüs, king of Argos, and forced the king's son Adrastus to flee from his ancestral home. «Thus the sons of Talaüs were no longer rulers, as they had been overpowered by civil strife, but, when a stronger man cometh, he doeth away with existing right» (14-15).[78]

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[75] Cf. Ol., VII, 43-44; XIII, 115.

[76] Pyth., X, 42-44; cf. Ol., VIII, 86.

[77] Nilsson, *Greek Piety*, p. 34.

[78] In Nem., X, 72: «... for men find it hard indeed to strive with those who are stronger», the situation, a combat between the mortal Idas and Zeus, has no relevance to the theme «might makes right». — Note, however, that in Pindar, witness of many athletic contests, the skill of a weaker contender sometimes triumphs over the might of a stronger one, as in Isth., IV, 34-35.

One might suspect that Hesiod had fallen into cynicism and despair of the incorrigible malefactors and bribe-devouring princes of an iron age when one reads: «Now, therefore, may neither I myself be righteous among men, nor my son — for then it is a bad thing to be righteous — if indeed the unrighteous shall have the greater right...» (270-272), if this sentiment were not redeemed by faith that justice would ultimately prevail: «But I think that all-wise Zeus will not yet bring that to pass» (273).

In the *Republic* (365 B) Adeimantus suggests to Socrates that the young who are seeking their way in life are apt to take seriously the words of Pindar: «Whether the race of men on earth mounteth a loftier tower by justice, or by crooked wiles, my mind is divided in telling clearly» (frag. 213, p. 611).[79]

In another fragment, graver in its implications, which Plato quotes in part in *Gorgias* (484 B), Pindar seems, this time with undivided mind, to be upholding the proposition that might makes right. Croiset's balanced analysis (pp. 233-234), places the matter, I believe, in correct perspective in the light of Pindar's many other assertions respecting justice: «Vaut-il la peine, à ce sujet, de s'arrêter longuement sur le fragment célèbre déjà rapporté par Hérodote [III, 38], puis cité à plusieurs reprises par Platon,[80] où Pindare... semble faire précisément la théorie de l'injustaice? 'La coutume, reine des hommes et des dieux, justifie l'empire de la force, qui mène toutes choses de sa puissante main. J'en juge par l'exemple d'Hercule. Près de la demeure cyclopéenne d'Eurysthée, il enleva les bœufs de Géryon sans les demander ni les acheter.' On se rappelle comme un personnage du *Gorgias*, le spirituel et brillant Calliclès, commentant ce passage, y voit la proclamation du droit de force. Qu'en faut-il penser? Calliclès a bien de l'esprit: mais son témoignage est suspect. Pindare n'annonçait-il pas simplement dans ce passage un fait d'expérience? N'y disait-il pas à sa manière, comme La Fontaine, que la raison du plus fort est toujours la meilleure? Je propose d'ailleurs cette explicaiton comme admissible, mais non comme certaine, tant s'en faut... Ce qui du moins reste incontestable, c'est que ce langage serait exceptionnel dans la poésie de Pindare; et il n'est pas douteux que la pensée dominante de ses odes[81] ne soit, en cette matière, tout l'opposé des théories de Calliclès.»[82]

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[79] Adeimantus gives a shortened version of the fragment.

[80] *Laws*, 690 B, 890 A; *Protagoras*, 337 D; so Sandys, p. 604.

[81] To the examples given in the preceding pages one may add Ol., II, 68-70: «But, whosoever, while dwelling in either world, have thrice been courageous in keeping their souls pure from all deeds of wrong, pass by the highway of Zeus unto the tower of Cronus...»; Pyth., IX, 95-96: «... give praise that is hearty and fair [σύν γε δίκᾳ], even to one's foe.» — On the other hand, Norwood, pp. 56-58, gives examples of the admittedly flagrant injustices of the gods, including Zeus. But that transports us to a world that is beyond the limits of the human condition, a world in which the application of irrelevant human standards brings into

Hesiod's prophetic role emerged from his experience of injustice at the hands of his brother and the judges corrupted by bribery. But he did not remain confined and diminished within the boundaries of his private bitterness. If his poetry stands beside that of Homer it is because he was capable of seeing and uttering the universal significance, for Boeotian society and for mankind, of the particular circumstances in which he had been an actor and a sensitive witness.

With that vision and commitment Ronsard had a good deal in common. In a letter to Jean Galland dated 17 December 1584 he asked his friend to obtain an installment of his pension from the Treasurer Pierre Molay. Anticipating a refusal, Ronsard instructed Galland to say as he took leave: «Vous ne debvez point, Monsieur, tomber sur la pointe de la plume de Monsieur de Ronsard qui est homme mordant et satyrique, au reste vostre voysin & qui sçait fort bien comme toutes choses se passent» (XVIII, 503).

I make no conjecture as to the dealings hinted at so darkly in the last phrase except to suggest that they do not appear to have been models of social equity. The conclusion of this letter obviously indicates that Ronsard was not above using the threat of satire as an instrument for obtaining his personal ends. But when he was deeply stirred by the vision of his suffering country, he had the instinctive magnanimity to rise in anger far above the personal source of injury. His voice became that of the prophet chastising the wicked and admonishing those who were leading France into dangerous paths. Then Ronsard, the aristocrat, like the aristocratic Pindar so many centuries earlier, might become the disciple of the peasant Hesiod writing at the dawn of European poetry.

Ronsard may no doubt have found the Hesiodic legend of the creation of Pandora, nowhere mentioned by Pindar, in any of a number of mythological handbooks or in the writings of many poets, but sooner or later he would come to the ultimate source in the *Works and Days* from which all must have drawn directly or indirectly.

The creation of Pandora was one of two acts of retribution by Zeus against Prometheus and mankind for having stolen and used fire from heaven:

> A bon droit Promethée
> Pour sa fraude inventée
> Endure un torment tel,
> Qu'un aigle sur la roche

---

question the validity of an amoral polytheism or of an excessively rigorous or vengeful monotheism, as well as the validity of everything noble in either of these religious systems.

[82] See the detailed discussion of Pindar's fragment in W.K.C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, III, 131-134. Cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 74-76.

Lui ronge d'un bec croche
Son poumon immortel.[83]

Depuis qu'il eut robée
La flamme prohibée
Pour les Dieux dépiter,
Les bandes inconnues
Des fievres sont venues
Parmi nous habiter...[84]

L'execrable Pandore
Fut forgée, & encore
Astrée s'en vola,
Et la boete feconde
Des maus, peupla le monde
De ses vices qu'il a.

Le depravé courage
Des hommes de nostre age
N'endure par ses faits,
Que Jupiter étuie
Sa foudre, qui s'ennuie
De voir tant de mefaits.
(II, 111-112)[85]

As Hesiod tells the myth, though Pandora let loose countless evils upon the world, Hope remained within the urn she had opened (*WD*, 97-99). In Ronsard's bitter *Complainte contre Fortune* (1559) Pandora, who in Hesiod is an instrument of the retributive justice of Zeus,[86] is transformed into a symbol of doubt as to the very possibility of Justice in human societies. Recognition and reward have been so often denied him that the continued presence of Hope has become for Ronsard one of the innumerable evils of existence, and he upbraids Pandora for not having released her along with the other plagues that beset mankind:

Et non tant seulement le mal-heur ne m'offense,[87]
Je le suis d'autre part de la fauce Esperance,
Bourelle de la vie, & qui le genre humain
Amuse d'une baye, & le repaist en vain.
Quiconques a produit l'esperance feconde,[88]
Mere des vanitez, il a produit au monde

[83] «Pour cette strophe et les suivantes... Ronsard s'est inspiré d'Hésiode, *Travaux et Jours*, 47-105...» Note by Laumonier — The description of Prometheus' torment, however, is in *Theogony*, 520-525.

[84] See R. Trousson, «Le mythe de Prométhée et de Pandore chez Ronsard», *Bull. de l'Assoc. G. Budé* (1961), p. 357.

[85] Cf. VIII, 50, and see R. Lebègue, *L.*, VIII, 365 (3e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*).

[86] Cf. R. Trousson, *art. cit.*, p. 360.

[87] «... la deuxième négation... ne s'explique pas, et il faut comprendre: Ce n'est pas seulement le malheur qui m'offense...» Note by Laumonier.

[88] «Féconde en maux.» Note by Laumonier.

La semence des maux (miserables boureaux
Qui de nuit & de jour tourmentent nos cerveaux).
Ha, mon dieu! tu devois, pauvre sotte Pandore,
La laisser envoler loing de ta boette encore,
Au Ciel ou en enfer, je ne m'en soucy' pas,
Pourveu que son sejour ne fust plus icy bas.
(X, 30; cf. XII, 217)

When Jean Brinon presented Ronsard with a panoply in 1554 the poet found a rather curious way of expressing his gratitude in *Les Armes* dedicated to the donor. The poem begins with a violent denunciation of the discoverer of iron as a person capable of the most unspeakable crimes; it continues with a contrast, reminiscent of Hesiod, between the Age of Iron and the Golden Age; accuses the one who first unearthed iron as the source of family discord and murder, of the invention of the sword and artillery, as the fomenter of war on earth and in the heavens, and as the author of the doctrine, «might makes right». La Fontaine's «La raison du plus fort...» was anticipated in Ronsard's «Les plus fors exerçoient justice par les armes» (VI, 206, v. 35).

He did not have to look beyond the Court for examples of this sort of justice even as he gratuitously absolved Charles Cardinal de Lorraine, in the hymn addressed to the prelate in 1559, of any complicity in it:

Tu es des offencez l'appuy & le soutien,
Tu n'ourdis nulle fraude au riche pour son bien,
Ton tresor ne s'accroist de la toison publique,
Par confiscations ni par moien inique,
Le marchant n'est par toy bany de sa maison,
Ny par toy l'inocent puny contre raison.
(IX, 66)

The noble Cardinal did not, of course, have to resort to arms to achieve ends of which Ronsard, who surely knew better, pronounced him guiltless. «L'essai du cardinal pour instituer un tribunal d'Inquisition», says Laumonier's note on this passage, «contredit ce témoignage de Ronsard. Quant aux confiscations de biens, c'est surtout Dianne de Poitiers, Montmorency et Saint-André qui s'en rendirent coupables, mais le cardinal de Lorraine se livra lui-même à des extorsions par chantage. Cf. [H.] Forneron, *op. cit.*, [*Les Ducs de Guise et leur époque*, 1877], I, chap. 3, p. 106 et suiv.»

Ronsard was, of course, never in danger of becoming the victim of such acts of official brigandage. As a poet he had so little to lose. What he most valued, his artistic craft, was in its nature inalienable, and would have been contemptuously ignored by any potential predator.

This nightingale —

Et je diroys, si j'etois un braguard
Que Rossignol vient du nom de Ronsard...
(XV, 187)

need have feared no hawk. He was certain that if, like Hesiod, he placed his footsteps in those of the Muses,

> J'aurois incontinent l'ame plus genereuse,
> Ainsi que l'Ascrean qui gravement sonna,
> Quand l'une des neuf Sœurs du laurier luy donna.
> (XII, 48)

One of these sisters, Euterpe, assured him that as a poet his heritage would be of such a modest nature as to defend him against the rapacities of a king:

> N'espere d'amasser de grands biens en ce Monde,
> Une forest, un pré, une montaigne, une onde
> Sera ton heritage, & seras plus heureux
> Que ceux qui vont cachant tant de thresors chez eux:
> Tu n'auras point de peur qu'un Roy de sa tempeste
> Te vienne en moins d'un jour écarboüiller la teste,
> Ou confisquer tes biens...
> (XII, 49-50)

VI. Justice and Mercy

Such thoughts were very far from Ronsard's mind when, at the beginning of his career, he said to Henri II in the *Ode de la Paix*:

> Plus tost que les feus ne s'elancent
> Quand au ciel les foudres nous tancent
> Je courrai dire aus estrangers...
> ... de quel soin prudent & caut
> Ton peuple justement tu guides...
> Rien ici bas ne s'acompare
> A l'equité divine & rare
> Dont un monarque est revetu.
> Aussi qu'est il plus vitieus
> Que leur peché tant soit il mince?
> D'autant que mil' mille & mille yeus
> Avisent la faute d'un Prince.
> (III, 29-31)

This eulogy of the justice of Henri II's reign reflects passages from Pindar's odes to or about Hieron, ruler of Syracuse, and Arcesilas, king of Cyrene: «Hieron, who wieldeth the sceptre of law[89] in fruitful Sicily» (Ol., I, 12-13); «Syracuse and Ortygia, which Hieron ruleth with unsullied[90] sceptre» (Ol., VI, 92-93); «Steer thy people with the helm of justice»[91] (Pyth., I,

[89] θεμιστεῖον, lawful, righteous.

[90] καθαρῷ, pure, spotless.

[91] δικαίῳ πηδαλίῳ, righteous rudder.

86); «thou, while thou walkest in the straight path,[92] hast prosperity in abundance about thee» (Pyth., V, 14).[93]

In Ronsard's tributes to the sense of justice of men of high rank encomium and truth dwell together more confidently in the case of Michel de l'Hospital than in that of Henri II or of Charles Cardinal de Lorraine.

It is undeniable that the poet's debt to l'Hospital was immeasurably great. The Pindaric ode that he dedicated in 1550 to the Chancellor of Madame Marguerite, who ten years later, as Chancellor of France, became «le chef suprême de l'administration de la justice»,[94] was a sincerely felt and magnanimous expression of his gratitude to the learned humanist and jurist who had intervened to save his incipient poetic career from a faltering beginning or possible failure.[95] But the words that Ronsard found to praise l'Hospital as a man of justice, while not disinterested, did not perhaps differ essentially from those uttered by other individuals whose obligations to the Chancellor may have been far slighter.[96] One cannot say of the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital* what Germaine Lafeuille correctly said of the *Hymne de la Justice* dedicated to the Cardinal de Lorraine: «Mais la 'justice' du cardinal n'était qu'un prétexte.»[97]

The eulogy of l'Hospital as a model of equity and justice, thanks to whom the Muses and their prophet Ronsard had found a place of honor in France, occupies many verses of the concluding triads of the great ode:

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[92] ἐν δίκᾳ, in justice.

[93] For a full comparison of Ronsard's verses with the texts of Pindar, see *POR*, pp. 93-94, 42-43.

[94] R. Doucet, *Les Institutions de la France au XVI^e siècle*, I, 106.

[95] See *Vie.*, pp. 20-21, *Rons. et l'Hum.*, pp. 178-187, *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 362-364, *RGTP*, pp. 247-253.

[96] On v. 752 of the ode to l'Hospital (see below), Laumonier quotes Nicolas Richelet's description of the Chancellor as a person of «docte & saincte preud'hommie». — «Son intégrité était telle [comme surintendant des finances] qu'elle lui donna même, raconte-t-on, le courage de refuser à Henri II une somme de vingt mille livres, que celui-ci lui réclamait un jour pour Diane de Poitiers: '*Songez*, dit-il au roi, *que c'est là le produit des contributions de vingt villages.*'» Henri Amphoux, *Michel de l'Hôpital et la liberté de conscience au XVI^e siècle* (1900), p. 112 (emphasis in text). — François Olivier, former Chancellor of France, in a letter to l'Hospital, who had complained of «les voleurs et les concussionnaires» of the Court, replied: «Je m'étonne que cette hydre épouvantable [les comptables du roi] ne t'ait pas encore attaqué, parce qu'elle siffle toujours contre les personnages les plus recommandables, et elle voue toute la haine à ceux qui administrent avec probité les deniers publics... Tu les vaincras, néanmoins, sans trop de peine, grâce à ton inébranlable fermeté et à ta constante justice.» *Op. cit.*, p. 113.

[97] *Cinq hymnes de Ronsard*, p. 85; Germaine Lafeuille adds, «Ronsard avait de plus fortes raisons de chanter cette 'fille de Dieu'».

De luy je ne veux rien dire
Dont je puisse estre menteur:
Mais veritable, il me plaist
De chanter bien hault, qu'il est
L'ornement de nostre France,
Et qu'en fidele equité,
En justice, & verité,
Les vieux siecles il devance.

STROPHE 23

C'est luy dont les graces infuses
Ont ramené dans l'univers
Le Chœur des Pierides Muses,
Faictes illustres par ses vers...
C'est luy qui honore, & qui prise
Ceulx qui font l'amour aux neuf Sœurs,
Et qui estime leurs doulceurs,
Et qui anime leur emprise.[98]

ANTISTROPHE

C'est luy (chanson) que tu reveres
Comme l'honneur de nostre Ciel,
C'est celuy qui aux Loix severes
A faict gouster l'Attique miel:
C'est luy qui la saincte balance
Congnoist, & qui ne bas ne hault,
Juste, son poix douteux n'elance,
La tenant droicte comme il fault:
C'est luy dont l'œil non variable
Notte les meschantz, & les bons,
Et qui contre le heurt des dons
Oppose son cœur imployable...

STROPHE 24

L'un, d'une chose ébat sa vie,
L'autre, par l'autre est surmonté:
Mais ton ame n'est point ravie
Sinon de justice & bonté.
Pour cela nostre MARGUERITTE
L'unique Sœur de ce grand ROY,
De loing espiant ton merite,
Bonne, a tiré le bon à soy.

(III, 160-162)

In these lines the Pindaric inspiration is muted, though it is relatively prominent in other parts of the final triads of the ode. The initial verses of the twenty-fourth strophe, however, repeat a thought, unrelated to the concept of justice, that is encountered with particular frequency in the Theban's triumphal odes — a recurrent insistence on the diversity and relativity of interests, abilities, and destinies that reign in human affairs. In his note on

[98] Entreprise. R. Lebègue in *L.*, III, 225, 2e tirage, 1968, *Appendice*.

vv. 783-784 Laumonier has indicated some of these passages: Nem., VII, 5-6, for example, «Yet it is not for equal aims that all of us draw our breath, for various indeed are the fates that severally fetter mortals in the chain of destiny» (cf. 54-55); or Pyth., IX, 59-60, «... the heart is thrilled with love for objects varied as men are varied» (cf. Nem., I, 25; Isth., I, 47).

In preparation for composing the two books of *Hymnes* of 1555 and 1556 and eventually the *Franciade*, Ronsard, «en attendant la manne royale... relit les poèmes didactiques d'Hésiode et d'Aratos, les épopées d'Homère, d'Apollonios, de Virgile, de Valerius Flaccus, les panégyriques dus à Théocrite, à Callimaque et à Claudien. Il note leurs moyens d'art, en extrait des épisodes, s'exerce à les imiter, se prépare en un mot à la grande entreprise. De là sont sortis les hymnes encomiastiques du premier livre (*Henry II, la Justice, le Temple des Chastillons*), et les hymnes épiniciens du second livre (*Calaïs et Zethes*; *Pollux et Castor*), qui sont de petites épopées» (*L.*, VIII, p. xii).[99]

The hymn to Henri II (VIII, 5-46), contains significant foreshadowings of some of the themes that will appear in the *Hymne de la Justice* and in *L'Hymne de... Charles Cardinal de Lorraine*: freedom from fear of arbitrary confiscations (vv. 225-226); retributive justice meted out for criminal offenses (vv. 227-234); and a strong adumbration of the debate between Justice and Mercy (Clemence) that is central to the *Hymne de la Justice* (vv. 235-256) — the whole preceded by praise of Henri II's prudence, like that of the victorious charioteer in Pindar's fifth Pythian ode (26-28), in shunning «Du vieil Epimethé la fille Repentance» (v. 223).

The fifth Pythian was written for Arcesilas of Cyrene. The charioteer, Carrhotus, was the brother of Arcesilas' queen. Pindar's most ambitious triumphal ode, the fourth Pythian, in thirteen triads and 299 verses, written to celebrate the same victory as the fifth, was also composed for Arcesilas, but «apparently... at the request of Damophilus, a noble who had been exiled for taking part in some aristocratic insurrection against the King of Cyrene, and had been staying at Thebes. The exile hopes to propitiate the king by the splendid offering of a lyric encomium composed on an ample scale by Pindar» (Sandys, p. 196).

The concluding verses of the ode are an appeal to the clemency of Arcesilas: «But thou, Arcesilas, art a most timely healer, and the God of Healing

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[99] Laumonier omits to mention here Ronsard's immense debt to the Old and New Testaments for the *Hymne de la Justice*. The omission was largely compensated by Jean Frappier in his article on that hymn (above, n. 71); by Raymond Lebègue in *L.*, VIII, 365-369, 3e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*; and by Joyce Main Hanks in her thesis on *Ronsard and Biblical Tradition*, *passim*, Washington University in St. Louis, 1977, Tübingen, Paris, 1982.

honoureth the light that cometh from thee. One must needs apply a gentle hand in tending a festering wound... Cyrene and the most glorious hall of Battus[100] were familiar with the righteous heart of Damophilus; for he... robbeth calumny of her loud voice; he hath learnt to loathe insolence; he contendeth [not] against the nobly born... But they say the saddest lot of all is to know the good, and yet, perforce, to be debarred therefrom. The famous Atlas is still bearing up against heaven's weight,[101] banished from his ancestral land and his possessions; but the Titans were set free by immortal Zeus... the exile [Damophilus] hopeth that the day will come, when he shall have drained to the dregs the cup of baneful woe, and shall see his home again» (270-294).

«Not the least memorable feature in this latter part of the ode», according to Farnell (I, 114), «is the enforcement of the lesson of mercy by the myth that Zeus himself forgave his enemies, the Titans...»[102]

Among the odes of Pindar the fourth Pythian is one that Ronsard seems to have studied least. The debate between Justice and Clemence in the *Hymne de la Justice* owes nothing to Pindar. But the lesson of divine mercy is the same. Jupiter-DIEU, angered by the account that Justice has given him of the iniquities she has witnessed on earth, determines that the time has come to pour a Deluge of fire upon the incorrigible race of men:

> Par trois jours tous entiers je ruray mon tonnerre
> Pluvant flammes du Ciel dessus toute la terre,
> Et feray sans pitié tous les corps enflammer
> Qui vivent sur les champs, par l'air, & dans la mer,
> Pour leur mechanceté, & la terre bruslée
> Ne sera (je le veux) jamais renouvelée
> D'un autre genre humain: car qui le referoit
> D'âge en âge suyvant, tousjours pire seroit.
>
> (VIII, 61)

He refuses even to consider the possibility of a merciful pardon as he had done after the original Deluge. He will destroy

> Des grans jusque aux petis, & que nul ne me prie
> Ainsi que l'autre fois de luy faire pardon,
> Je ne le feray pas, car un seul ne vit bon.
>
> (*Loc. cit.*)

The Lord's threat of universal destruction would have been carried out

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[100] Name of the founder of the city in the seventh century, B.C. Battus IV was the father of Arcesilas.

[101] As punishment for his part in the rebellion of the Titans agains Ouranos.

[102] Cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 82-83.

Sans sa fille Clemence, à l'œil paisible, & doux,
Qui ses genoux luy baize, & retient son couroux.
Pere, puis qu'il t'a pleu entre tes Noms de mettre
Le nom de tresbenin, il faut aussi permettre
A ta rigueur d'user des effectz de ce Nom,
Autrement tu serois en vain apellé bon.[103]
Je sçay bien, si tu veux tout ce Monde deffaire
En moins d'un seul clin d'œil, que tu le pourras faire,
Ce qu'il ne faut, Seigneur, car la destruction
N'est pas seant à DIEU, mais generation...
Si tu destruis le Monde, il fauldra qu'il retienne
De son premier Chaos la figure ancienne,
Et si tout est confus, qui adoncques dira
Les Hymnes de ta gloire, & ton nom benira?...
Si tu frapes leur cœur, ilz te voudront entendre,
Car il n'est pas de roche, il est humain & tendre,
Lequel sera tantost, bien qu'il soit endurcy,
Châtié de son vice, & te crîra mercy.
(VIII, 62-64)

The entreaty of Clemence is followed by a reminder from Themis that it is she who, by the will of Jupiter himself, possesses «l'autorité sur toutes Destinées» (v. 355), and that according to «les secretz du Destin, Le Monde ne doit pas encore prendre fin» (vv. 361-362). But the somewhat coldly rational argument of Themis (vv. 345-394) is far from having the persuasive force of the moving plea for mercy by Clemence. It was her words that Henri Chamard must have had in mind when he described the poem on Justice as «un hymne dont certaines parties atteignent à la véritable éloquence».[104]

[103] «Ce discours est analogue à ceux par lesquels Abraham et Moïse apaisent la colère de Dieu en invoquant sa clémence: *Genèse*, ch. XVIII, 23 à 32; *Exode*, ch. XXXII, 11 à 14; *Nombres*, ch. XIV, 11 à 21.» Note by Laumonier.

[104] *Hist. de la Pl.*, II, 197.

CHAPTER XXIII

ETHICS IN PINDAR AND RONSARD: TERRESTRIAL BONDS, CELESTIAL AFFINITIES (III)

I. Vicissitude, «la loy de Nature & de Dieu»

«One is the origin [γένος] of men and gods, and from a single mother we both draw breath. Yet potency utterly distinct divides us, so that the one is nothing, but the brazen sky remains a seat secure forever. Yet we are a little like the immortals in great mind or form, though we know neither by day nor through our nights to what goal fate has written that we run» (Nem., VI, 1-7; trans. Finley, p. 73).

On these verses Finley comments: «If... *genos* means 'origin'... [Pindar] will appear to have known the line of the *Works and Days* (108) on the common descent of gods and men from Earth,[1] and the present passage will be a searching of that deeply moving idea. This is in fact its character» (*loc. cit*).

As descendants of Earth, herself subjet to the vicissitudes of seasonal changes and the serenities and catastrophes associated with natural events, the gods cannot entirely escape the inherent consequences, even the instinctual impulses, that result from this parentage. «Les dieux jouissent d'un bonheur inaltérable, et cependant, par une contradiction qui ne choquait pas l'esprit populaire, ils sont soumis dans leurs légendes particulières à toutes sortes de vicissitudes» (Croiset, p. 166).

«This immanence of the gods in nature», Finley says (p. 75), of the same sixth Nemean, «is the undertone of the poem, and through it the theme of vicissitudes takes on the force of natural law.[2] The effect of the law is double. It binds man's life to the sleep and darkness of Earth, yet lifts it to periodic

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[1] «... how the gods and mortal men sprang from one source.» Cf. Hesiod's *Theogony*, 104-107: «Hail, children of Zeus! Grant lovely song and celebrate the holy race of the deathless gods who are for ever, those that were born of Earth and starry Heaven and gloomy Night and them that briny Sea did rear.» See Part I, pp. 303-304.

[2] Cf. Fränkel, p. 526: «... human life is seen as subject to the natural law of a sequence of radical transformations: fortune turns to misfortune and misfortune often back to good fortune...»

bloom and brilliance. The gods are felt in both processes, and vicissitude becomes both submission and emergence.»[3]

The sixth Nemean was written c. 461 B.C. for Alcimidas of Aegina. Finley's comment is an interpretation of the first antistrophe: «Even now doth Alcimidas prove to all eyes that the inborn valour of his race resembleth the corn-bearing fields, which in changing seasons, at one while, give to man abundant sustenance from the plains, and, at another while, gather strength by repose» (8-11). In the circling alternations of the seasons Pindar sees a metaphor of a similar rhythm in the generations of man. «The transience of prosperity and the unpredictability and inevitability of fate are commonplaces in the literature of the archaic age. What is not commonplace... is the idea of a fluctuation, more or less by generations, between success and failure, or between glory and obscurity.»[4]

These thoughts on the mutability of fortune reappear in the eleventh Nemean and the eighth Pythian, both composed in Pindar's old age. Understandably, the expression is more somber, but the recurrent brightness all the more radiant. «Let him recall», Pindar tells the victor Aristagoras in the eleventh Nemean, «he dresses mortal limbs, and last of all will don a dress of earth» (15-16). «Ancient excellence renews its power by alternation in the ages of men. Black furrows yield their harvest discontinuously, nor in all circuits of the years will trees bear fragrant blossoms with like wealth, but changingly» (37-42, trans. Finley, p. 76). The notion of vicissitude as a dominant presence in life is perhaps nowhere expressed by Pindar with deeper feeling or greater visionary clarity than in the concluding verses of the eighth Pythian, with its alternation of deepest shadow and brilliant light, of untoward destiny and serene life. The ineradicable ambivalence of terrestrial phenomena, of the ultimate vanity of vanities and evanescent abounding fulfillments, of vicissitude as a natural law commanding both resignation and transcendence, enter into the structure of the poet's thought and become of one substance with it. «Der Genuss einer ganz glücklichen Stunde kann die Nichtigkeit alles Menschenlebens nicht aufheben. Dieser Zwiespalt der Empfindung ist in der Seele des grossen Dichters.»[5]

From an early time, in the final verses of his *Hymne de la Mort* (1555), this dissonance in Nature, indistinguishable from her harmony, had become, and was to remain to the end, part of the structure of Ronsard's thought, derived from Heraclitean, Biblical, and possibly Pindaric sources. Like

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[3] See Pyth., XII, 28-32; VIII, 76-78.

[4] G.M. Kirkwood, «*Nemean* 7 and the Theme of Vicissitude in Pindar», in *Poetry and Poetics from Ancient Greece to the Renaissance*. Studies in Honor of James Hutton, ed. by G.M. Kirkwood (Ithaca and London, 1975), p. 68.

[5] Wilamowitz, p. 444.

the authors of these ancient books, Ronsard had come upon an inviolable law that soon entered intimately into his own possession:

Que ta puissance (ô MORT) est grande & admirable!
Rien au monde par toy ne se dit perdurable,
Mais tout ainsi que l'onde à-val des ruisseaux fuit
Le pressant coulement de l'autre qui la suit,
Ainsi le temps se coulle, & le present faict place
Au futur importun qui les tallons luy trace:
Ce qui fut se refaict, tout coulle comme une eau,
Et rien dessous le Ciel ne se void de nouveau:[6]
Mais la forme se change en une autre nouvelle,
Et ce changement là, VIVRE au monde s'appelle,
Et MOURIR, quand la forme en une autre s'en va.[7]
Ainsi, avec Venus la Nature trouva
Moyen de r'animer par longs & divers changes,
La matiere restant, tout cela que tu manges:
Mais nostre ame immortelle est tousjours en un lieu,
Au change non sujette, assise aupres de DIEU,
Citoyenne à-jamais de la ville ætherée
Qu'elle avoit si long temps en ce corps desirée.
(VIII, 178)

It would perhaps be too venturesome to assert that in the first verses of this passage Ronsard was reminded of the «billow of Hades [that] rolleth over all alike (Nem., VII, 30-31), or of the wave imagery in the twelfth Olympian: «The hopes of men are tossed, now high, now low, as they cleave the treacherous seas of fancies vain. But never yet hath any man on earth found a sure token sent from heaven to tell him how he shall fare in the future...» (Ol., XII, 5-8).[8] The same year in which the *Hymne de la Mort* had appeared saw the publication in the third edition of the *Odes* of a poem containing some of Ronsard's finest lines on the eternal movement of the waves symbolically contrasting with the inexorable movement toward death of ephemeral man:

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[6] There is nothing incongruous in this encounter of Ecclesiastes and Heraclitus. They would meet again, just as appropriately, in the last verses of the *Franciade*, after the endless recital of successive monarchies that fills the fourth book.

[7] Cf. X, 319, vv. 97-102.

[8] Laumonier is undoubtedly right in saying (VI, 103, n. 2) of the *Odelette à luy mesmes* (inc. *Pour boire dessus l'herbe tendre*), «Cette pièce est imitée de l'ode anacréontique 'Επὶ μυρσίναις τερείναις...» But Ronsard could not have obtained from «Anacreon» verses 7-9:

L'incertaine vie de l'homme
Incessamment se roule, comme
Se roulent aus rives les flots...

They may have come from Ol., XII, 5-8. Sandys, Puech, Myers, Farnell, Gildersleeve, Lattimore — all take this passage as a marine image. Thus Pindar seems at this point to have invaded the Anacreontics of Ronsard, who heeded the injunction «Πινδαρικόν τι δέ μοι... ἐγχέοι» (J.M. Edmonds, *Elegy and Iambus... with the Anacreontea*, II, 48).

Ondes, sans fin vous promenés,
Et vous menés & ramenés
Vos flots d'un cours qui ne sejourne,
Et moi, sans faire long sejour,
Je m'en vais de nuit & de jour,
Mais comme vous je ne retourne.
(VII, 99)

These verses occur in Ode XIII (inc. *Quand je suis vint ou trente mois*), concerning which Laumonier credibly says «... je suis porté à croire qu'aucun poète, ancien ou italien, n'a servi de modèle direct à Ronsard pour cette ode admirable...» (*RPL*, p. 462). But for the stanza I have quoted Ronsard had himself provided the model four years earlier in the ode *Aux trois sœurs, Anne, Marguerite, Jane de Seymour*:

Las, ce qu'on voit de mondain[9]
Jamais ferme ne se fonde,
Ains fuit & refuit soudain
Comme le branle d'une onde,
Qui ne cesse de rouller,
De s'avançer & couller,[10]
Tant que rampant il arrive
D'un grand heurt contre sa rive.
(III, 45-46)

In vv. 325-329 of the *Hymne de la Mort* Ronsard seems to establish an equation between the world's vicissitudes and life — VIVRE is defined by the incessant transformations that everything in the universe must undergo. The twenty-fourth elegy, which in the edition of 1623 received the title *Contre les bucherons de la forest de Gastine*, was not published until 1584, though it was probably written in 1573 as a protest againt the threatened destruction of the forest in which the poet had passed some of the happiest moments of his early years. The impending devastation of Gastine affected Ronsard deeply and led in the final verses of the elegy to these melancholy reflections in which the theme of perpetual flux is implicitly raised to the level of natural law:

Que l'homme est malheureux qui au monde se fie!
O Dieux, que veritable est la Philosophie,
Qui dit que toute chose à la fin perira,
Et qu'en changeant de forme une autre vestira:
De Tempé la vallée un jour sera montagne,
Et la cyme d'Athos une large campagne,

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[9] «C. à d. en ce bas monde, opposé à la 'demeure éternelle' des âmes vertueuses.» Note by Laumonier. — Ronsard's ode formed part of the *Tombeau de Marguerite de Valois*, Queen of Navarre.

[10] «Image chère à Ronsard», says Raymond Lebègue, *L.*, III, 222 (2e tirage, 1968, *Appendice*), who cites the three passages reproduced above; cf. X, 9, vv. 79-85; XIII, 213, v. 38.

Neptune quelquefois de blé sera couvert.
La matiere demeure, & la forme se perd.[11]
(XVIII, 146-147)

A quarter of a century earlier, in the Pindaric ode to Gui de Chabot (1547), Ronsard had already formulated the natural law which he was to express with sadness and resignation at the end of the elegy to Gastine:

La loi de nature tourne,
Rien de ferme ne sejourne,
Divers vens sont en mesme heure:
Ore Iver, ores Printens:
La vertu ferme demeure
Encontre le heurt du tens.[12]
(I, 104-105)

The imagery of waves symbolizing in the *Hymne de la Mort* the impermanence of all worldly things is here anticipated by the imagery of fitful winds which Ronsard had met more than once in Pindar: «In one single space of apportioned time, the breezes swiftly change from day to day» (Ol., VII, 94-95); «Changeful are the breezes of the winds that blow on high. The bliss of man doth not proceed unimpaired for long» (Pyth., III, 104-105; cf. Isth., IV, 5-6).

In the *Epistre à Charles de Pisseleu*, also published among the *Hymnes* of 1555, Ronsard, like Shakespeare, would find sweetness in the uses of adversity:

«Si DIEU nous avoit faictz exens de tout malheur,
Comme Anges, non sugets à peine & à douleur,
«On ne cognoistroit point la vertu de Prudence,
«La Magnanimité, la Force & la Constance,
«Que congnoistre on ne peut en la prosperité,
«Quand Fortune nous rit, mais en l'adversité...
(VIII, 225)

Happiness, to be humanly meaningful, must of necessity alternate with «une tristesse dure» (v. 20):

«Car qui[13] voudroit tousjours en un point se trouver
«Il ne pourroit durer: telles loix feit Nature
«Des le commencement à toute creature.[14]
(*Loc. cit.*)

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[11] Ronsard returned again and again, especially in the last year of his life, to restatements of the principle of the eternal mutation of the world's substance in an infinite variety of forms. See XVIII, 146, n. 3, for the relevant citations. See also A. Kibédi Varga in *Lumières de la Pléiade*, pp. 151-152, and my *Three Ronsard Studies*, pp. 137-142.

[12] The last verses of the *Franciade* repeat the same thought.

[13] *Sc.* «si quelqu'un».

[14] «Pour tout ce début guillemetté [vv. 1-38], Ronsard s'est inspiré de Plutarque, *Consol. à Apoll.*, chap. 4 et 5, et peut-être de Stobée, *Flor.*, section XCVIII, περὶ τοῦ βίου.» Note by Laumonier, VIII, 226, n. 1. — The *Epistre à Pisseleu* is also a *consolatio* (see vv. 39-54).

The first 38 verses of this *Epistre* are a forerunner of the *Discours à Maistre Juliain Chauveau* (1569) whose title was changed in 1584 to *Discours de l'alteration & change*[15] *des choses humaines*. Apart from the introductory verses, the revised title gives a relatively exact idea of Ronsard's intention in writing the *Discours*, an intention clearly defined in this apostrophe to the *dédicataire*:

> Leve, Chauveau, de tous costez les yeux,
> Voy ces rochers au front audacieux,
> C'estoient jadis des plaines fromenteuses:
> Voy d'autre part ces grands ondes venteuses,
> Ce fut jadis terre ferme, où les bœufz
> Alloient paissant par les patiz herbeux,
> Ainsy la forme en une autre se change,
> Cela n'est pas une merveille estrange,
> Car c'est la loy de Nature & de Dieu,
> Que rien ne soit perdurable en un lieu.
> (XV, 157-158)

II. The Impenetrable Future

«Pindar's poetical genius thrives most abundantly in a characteristically Greek sphere of consciousness. The Greeks, from Homer onwards, were haunted, even obsessed, by a sense of the insecurity and the shadowiness of human life and asserted themselves against it by a prodigious exertion of intellectual and physical powers.»[16] Even in an ode like the seventh Olympian for Diagoras of Rhodes in which «Wealth and success seem slightly too assured... the theme of the poem is precisely the lack of assurance in the world» (Finley, p. 70). In the very act of celebrating the ancestry of the victorious Diagoras, descended from Heracles and ultimately from Zeus (20-23), Pindar adds the chastening thought: «Countless are the snares that hang around the minds of men, and there is no means of finding what is best for a man to light on, not only now, but also in the end» (25-26).[17]

«Lâs», says Ronsard to Guy Peccate in the *Odes* of 1550:

> Lâs on ne peut connoistre
> Le destin qui doit naistre,
> Et l'homme en vain poursuit
> Conjecturer la chose,
> Que Dieu sage tient close
> Sous une obscure nuit.
> (II, 109-110)

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[15] In 1587: changement.

[16] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 365.

[17] Cf. Nem., VI, 6-7; XI, 43-46; Isth., VIII, 13-14.

That Ronsard was following the text of Horace's ode (III, xxix, 29-30), as Laumonier's note states, is unquestionably correct, but one does not hazard too much in suggesting that the original source of both might have been either the passage in Pindar's ode to Diagoras or a similar one to some other victor in the Games, Theron, for example, to whom the Theban lyrist says, «Verily, for mortal men at least, the time when their life will end in the bourne of death is not clearly marked...» (Ol., II, 30-31). These are the lines that were in Ronsard's mind when he wrote the following words of consolation to Joachim Du Bellay:

> Nul terme[18] de nostre vie
> Par nous ne se juge pas,
> Ignorans le jour qu'en bas
> Elle doit estre ravie:
> De sus l'esté de ses ans
> Rongé de soucis cuisans
> Ton grand Langé[19] laissa l'ame...
> (I, 115)

III. Tyche-Fortune

«Daughter of Zeus the Deliverer! thou saving goddess, Fortune! [Τύχα]. I pray thee to keep watch around mighty Himera; for, at thy bidding, swift ships are steered upon the sea, and speedy decisions of war and counsels of the people are guided on the land... Full many things have befallen man, of which he little dreamed, bringing, to some, reversal of delight, while others, after battling with a sea of troubles, have, in a short space of time, exchanged their anguish for the deepest joy» (Ol., XII, 1-12).

The twelfth Olympian was written for Ergoteles of Himera who had won the long foot-race in 472 B.C. Pindar's invocation of the personified abstraction or divinity Tyche, «found only here in the *Epinicians*»,[20] was prompted as much by the alterations of circumstance in the life of Ergoteles as by the recent tumultuous history of Himera. «Ergoteles was a mature man with many vicissitudes of fortune behind him. The city of Himera also had gone through a stormy period... Many of her citizens perished in the troubles; to make up the lists, immigrants were invited... Among these was Ergoteles of Cnossus in Crete, who had suffered exile in civil conflicts and now had the chance of having a home again... The essential quality of vicissitudes such as

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[18] The word translates exactly Pindar's πεῖρας, limit, in v. 31 of the second Olympian.

[19] Joachim Du Bellay's uncle, Guillaume du Bellay, Seigneur de Langey.

[20] G.M. Kirkwood, *art. cit.* (above, n. 4), p. 71, who adds, «the concept is far more common in Pindar than its personification as a divinity...»

he had undergone, from prosperity to disaster and back again, was called in Greek *tychê*: the word can also denote the destiny of whole communities» (Fränkel, p. 439).

The imagery of the storm-wracked sea in the prelude, as well as the invocation to Tyche, were felicitously chosen. Tyche herself, according to Hesiod's *Theogony*, 360-362, if not according to Pindar's twelfth Olympian, was the daughter of Ocean and Tethys, one of the primordial divinities of the sea.[21] Ergoteles, moving from island to island across the Mediterranean of changing moods, must have experienced both the actual and metaphoric storms of a life of exile. Of this prelude Gildersleeve says (p. 225): «There is something symbolic of the vicissitudes of Fortune in the numerous antitheses. The poem rocks like a ship. The deep, the land—wars, councils—up, down—no pledge from God, no foresight of man—pleasure reversed, pain redeemed.» «The simple thought», the same author says, «is the domination of Tyché» (p. 224).

But her domination in Pindar is not that of a fitful and arbirary Chance. «The poem... exemplifies especially clearly one aspect of Pindar's perception of mutability. The figure of Τύχα here and the concept of τύχα... do not have the suggestion of capricious or incomprehensible chance that is usual in later writers. Pindar uses the word most commonly in such phrases as τύχα θεῶν [«destiny sent by the gods»] (*P.*, 8, 53), τύχα δαίμονος [«heaven-sent good-fortune»] (*O.*, 8, 67)... which suggest divine dispensation... What comes by τύχα is unforeseeable and mysterious, but it is managed by divine will, not by random chance. As in other Pindaric expressions of mutability, there is in this poem of Τύχα a strong underlying sense of divine control and stability.»[22]

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[21] «Tyche here [in Ol., XII] is at once the inner experience of fortune and the guide through an outer sea. Indeed, considered as both good and bad fortune, she is herself the sea, which is also the gusty course of battle or decision and the dangerous succession of time.» Finley, p. 149. — According to F. Allègre, *Etude sur la déesse grecque Tyché* (1889), pp. 11-12, Tyche, originally a goddess of the fecundity of the soil, assumed the characteristics of a marine deity when Greek colonization of the coasts of the Mediterranean notably increased commerce and navigation. Tyche then began to be invoked by «les matelots en danger, ainsi que [par] ceux qui couraient après la richesse sur les voies de mer et dont la fortune était sans cesse en péril. La qualité de fille de l'Océan qu'Hésiode, dès le début, avait attribuée à Tyché, rendit facile et naturelle cette modification».

[22] Kirkwood, *art. et loc. cit.* See Plato, *Laws*, 709 B. Cf. Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *op. cit.*, (above, Chap. XXII, n. 47), p. 162; Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 87; Croiset, p. 225; *Paideia*, I, 124: «Archilochus' religious thought is rooted in the problem of Tyché, and his knowledge of God is knowledge of Tyché.» — In the *Liber Fortunae*, a 14th century French poem of unknown authorship, «The goddess... seems to have lost all her pagan attributes. Even the hazard of luck is made subordinate to God's will by the fact that she is God's daughter and bestows her gifts most generously on those who follow her Christian teaching». John L. Grigsby, «The Goddess Fortuna in the *Liber Fortunae*», *L'Esprit Créateur*, II (1962), 110-113.

In the Hellenistic period following the conquests and death of Alexander the Great this concept of Tyche began gradually to change. The underlying sense of divine control in Pindar's understanding of the nature of Tyche slowly weakened, and was replaced in part by a secularized perception in which the notion of pure chance was dominant.[23] According to Nilsson, «The comedian Philemon [c. 361-262 B.C.] puts the thought into most pointed words: 'In Tyche we have no deity, no, no! but what happens of itself (*to autómaton*)[24] [without cause, spontaneous, accidental, mere chance] to each of us, that we call Tyche.'» Sometimes, Nilsson continues, «even Polybios [c. 203?-c. 120 B.C.] cannot get clear of the popular conceptions and uses its expressions. Tyche... plays with men as with little children; she is deceitful and incalculable, she loves to turn human reckonings upside-down... The feeling, however, that Tyche was a divine power had not been lost.»[25]

In the second Olympian we find one of those passages, so characteristic of Pindar's odes, on the vicissitudes to which the lives of mortals are exposed: «But diverse are the currents that at divers times come upon men, either with joy or with toils. Even thus Fate [Μοῖρα], which handeth a kindly fortune [πότμον] down from sire to son, bringeth at another time some sad reverse [πῆμ' ἄγει παλιντράπελον], together with heaven-sent bliss...» (33-37).

It should be noted that neither the personification of Fortune (Τύχα), nor the unpersonified concept of luck, good fortune, or chance (τύχα), is found in these verses. Yet largely on the basis of the word παλιντράπελον, to which he assigns a rotational connotation,[26] Norwood states (p. 132), that «This... passage... refers plainly to the motion of a wheel. Here, then, we find indicated for the first time in literature that most familiar and most impressive of all metaphors — the Wheel of Fortune...»[27]

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[23] See E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 242.

[24] By the time of Philemon, of course, the notion of the role of spontaneity or pure chance in creation already had a relatively long history. «Aristote cite..., parmi les philosophes qui ont fait usage du hasard, l'école atomistique, directement dérivée de celle d'Empédocle. 'Il y a des philosophes qui donnent le hasard (τὸ αὐτόματον) pour cause du ciel tel que nous le voyons et de toutes les parties du monde...'» F. Allègre, *op. cit.*, p. 109. — The passage in question is in the *Physics*, 196 a 26-28. In the Oxford translation of R.P. Hardie and R.K. Gaye, Democritus is mentioned in the note on these lines as one of those who ascribed «this heavenly sphere and all the world to spontaneity».

[25] *Greek Piety*, p. 86.

[26] Sandys, Gildersleeve, Myers, Puech, Farnell, Lattimore, do not find this connotation in the word; Slater's *Lexicon to Pindar* defines it as «causing a change». Norwood (p. 253) found support for his interpretation in observations by Headlam and Robinson.

[27] Norwood's position is supported with much ingenuity, pp. 132-133, and in notes 46 and 47 on pp. 252-255.

In Rome the principle of Chance was embodied in the figure of Fortuna. «Elle s'identifie en effet avec la Tyché grecque. On la représente avec la corne d'abondance, avec un gouvernail (car c'est elle qui 'pilote' la vie des hommes)... le plus souvent aveugle.»[28]

Though there are frequent allusions to Fortune in Ronsard, he never mentions Tyche by name. In every period of his poetic career various aspects of the personality of Tyche-Fortuna, as it unfolded from age to age, found a place in his writing, and there is an occasional passage, as, for example, in the *Priere à la Fortune*, in which all of her most significant characteristics are brought together in a sort of telescopic fusion of time and tradition. She was invoked by Pindar in the confident assurance that his prayer would be answered by an act of divine will. Yet for Ronsard, who had inherited all the distinctive traits of Tyche-Fortuna that had accumulated about her through the centuries, the element of inscrutable chance and caprice, Philemon's *to autómaton*, was certain to leave a powerful imprint on his representations of her.[29] So would the image of her incurable instability represented in her precarious balance on the Wheel of Fortune.

Ronsard's *Priere à la Fortune* was dedicated to Odet Cardinal de Chastillon in 1555. Its prelude (vv. 1-64) is a long adulation of the Cardinal, Ronsard's Maecenas (vv. 31-32), and of the Colignys in general; the rest of the poem will be an even longer series of prayers to Fortune on behalf of each of the individual members of this family. The poet feigns concern that the prolixity of his prelude might not give the Cardinal undiluted pleasure:

> Car vous avez à quoy passer le temps
> D'autres plus grands, & meilleurs passe-temps
> Que cestuy-cy, puis je fais conscience
> D'abuser trop de vostre pacience.

But he desists with a certain show of reluctance as he turns to a briefer secondary prelude which will introduce the true subject of his poem:

> Las! qu'il me fâche, & que j'ay de soucy
> De ce qu'il faut que je detourne icy
> Mon vers tout-court de sa premiere adresse,
> Pour r'encontrer une aveugle Deesse[30]
> Comme est Fortune, en qui ne fut, ny n'est
> Veüe en ses yeux, ny en ses piedz d'arrest:

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[28] Grimal, p. 160, s.v. *Fortuna*, who adds, p. 465, s.v. *Tyché*, «Parfois, la Tyché est représentée aveugle».

[29] See for example I, 107, vv. 109-112; III, 27, vv. 369-371; VI, 121, vv. 11-12; VII, 301-302, *Sonet à Madame Marguerite*; VIII, 170, vv. 162-164; X, 333, vv. 11-12; etc. It is not always easy to know when Ronsard personifies this abstraction — he alternates between writing «fortune» and «Fortune».

Mais toutefois il faut que je la chante
Car c'est le but de ma chanson presente.
(VIII, 105-106)

The opening verses of the ensuing prayer to Fortune are as well chosen, in their way, as those of the twelfth Olympian, or, to put the matter somewhat differently, Ronsard made a happy selection of the prelude of Olympian XII for his own invocation to the divinity. Pindar calls upon Tyche as the goddess upon whom depends the safety of ships at sea and the fate of armies on land. Ronsard addresses Odet de Coligny in a *Priere à la Fortune* which will include entreaties on behalf of the Cardinal's brother, the Admiral, Gaspard de Coligny (vv. 201, 238), and his second brother, the General, François d'Andelot (vv. 247-250). That is why, I would suggest, Ronsard's invocation repeats the essential elements of Pindar's:

O grand' Deesse,[31] ô FORTUNE, qui tiens
Entre tes mains les hommes & leurs biens,
Dessus les champs qui conduitz les armées,
Et sur la mer les galeres ramées...[32]

In what follows Pindar has little or no part. It is, so to speak, an alluvium of themes deposited by the literary currents of many centuries, possibly further enriched by «peintures et... gravures traditionnelles, que certains peintres, tels que Dürer et Raphaël avaient renouvelées au début du XVI[e] siècle...»[33] Without interruption Ronsard's apostrophe continues to Fortune, the great divinity,

Qui t'esjouïs de n'avoir point de foy,
Qui d'un potier fais, s'il te plaist, un roy,
Et d'un grand roy fais un maistre d'escole,
Qui de ton chef hurtes le haut du pole,
Et de tes piedz la terre vas foulant

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[30] Cf. IX, 55, v. 482; X, 6, v. 27; 17, v. 26.

[31] In vv. 86, 95, and 96 Ronsard continues to dwell on the divinity and power of Fortune, but in vv. 237-246 he warns her to be especially watchful over the well-being of the Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, for

Si par ta ruse il a quelque mechef,
Je t'envoiray tout d'un coup sur le chef,
Comme Archiloq', mille iambes, pour prendre
Quelque licol, à fin de t'aller pendre...
(VIII, 112)

[32] «A rapprocher d'une ode d'Horace *Ad Fortunam* (I, 35), surtout pour marquer les différences.» Note by Laumonier. — The differences between these and the initial verses of Horace's ode are, indeed, as great as the marked similarities between Ronsard's lines and the prelude of Pindar's twelfth Olympian.

[33] Note by Laumonier (VIII, 114, n. 3) reporting an opinion of H. Busson.

Dessus un globe incessamment roulant,[34]
Qui n'euz jamais ny arrest ny demeure,
Qui des humains à toute-heure-à-toute-heure
Es appellée en langages divers,
Mais tout d'un sens, royne de l'Univers,
Qui seule es bonne & mauvaise nommée,
Seule haye, & seule reclamée,
Seule invoquée, & seule qui fais tout,
Seule qui est comencement & bout
De toute chose, à qui châcun refere
Egualement son bien & sa misere:
Et bref, qui tout en ce monde accomplis,
Et le fueillet des deux pages remplis.

(VIII, 106)

Some years after the *Priere à la Fortune* Ronsard composed his *Complainte contre Fortune* (1559), and once more the *dédicataire* was Odet Cardinal de Chastillon. In the *Complainte* the poet expresses his deep contrition for having abandoned the Muses (v. 122) in order to satisfy worldly ambitions:

Et alors à bon droit les Muses, couroucées
De quoy je les avois si laschement laissées,
Vindrent à la Fortune, & lui dirent ainsi:
O Déesse, qui tiens tout ce qui est icy
Enclos desous la Lune, & qui seule as puissance
Sur tout cela qui prend en ce monde naissance,
Qui fais tout, qui peux tout, & qui gouvernes tout,
Sans nul commencement, sans milieu, ny sans bout,
A qui les puissans Roys doivent leurs grans armées,
A qui les mariniers leurs galeres ramées,[35]
A qui le laboureur son travail annuel,
Et à qui le marchand son soing continuel,
Qui tiens dedans tes mains les Roys & les Empires,
Qui en bas & en haut les brouilles & les vires
Comme tu veux, Déesse, & qui par l'univers
Seule te fais nommer de mille noms divers,
Selon que tu es dure, ou bonne, ou favorable:
Entens nostre oraison, & nous sois secourable.

(X, 23-24)

In spite of the evident similarities of this passage with the corresponding one in the *Priere à la Fortune*, there is one notable difference between the two, and also between the image of Fortune in the *Complainte* and Pindar's

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[34] Cf. v. 293 which represents Fortune with a «boule sous tes piedz»; generally, however, Ronsard favors the Wheel of Fortune (which on occasion becomes the spinning wheel of the Fates), as the symbol of her instability; see IX, 106, v. 37; 117, v. 7; X, 6, v. 27; XVII, 39, vv. 51-54; XVIII, 152, vv. 59-66.

[35] Note the repetition in almost identical language and rhymes of the opening verses of Ronsard's entreaty in the *Priere à la Fortune*.

conception of Tyche in the twelfth Olympian. Fortune here begins to assume, more unmistakably than in the *Priere*, the attributes of a supreme deity, «Sans nul commencement, sans milieu, ny sans bout».[36] In Olympian XII Tyche is invoked as the daughter of Zeus; in the *Complainte*, after the Muse has voiced her accusation of Ronsard, Fortune ratifies her words with a Jovian gesture reminiscent of Homer and of Pindar:

> A tant se teut la Muse: & Fortune, du clin
> D'un sourcy rabaissé,[37] mist leur priere à fin.
> (X, 26)

A Pindaric equivalent of such verses, had it been possible, would have implied the usurpation of the Olympian power of Zeus by his daughter Tyche. For Ronsard, who moved easily between a fitful comprehension of the majesty of Zeus-Jupiter[38] and a whimsical levity of attitude toward Jupiter-Jupin, that possibility could arise as a consequence of a sometimes shallow appreciation of the genuine values of Greek mythological figures or personified abstractions.

IV. Poetry, Philosophy, and Divine Inspiration

Neither Pindar nor Ronsard would have dreamt of presenting their thought in anything resembling a systematic philosophic form, though the second is the more likely to approximate occasional philosophic expression. They lacked, or did not feel the want of, the organizing, architectonic vision of a Lucretius or a Dante. That does not mean that they were philosophic ciphers nor that their reflections were ignored by later thinkers. Bowra points out, for example,[39] that the Theban poet was indifferent to the problem of the nature of appearance and reality, which was the supreme concern of his contemporary Parmenides.[40] «To bridge the gulf between these two orders was the task of philosophers, who culminated in Plato, but Pindar, who cared nothing for the problem presented in this way, was deeply conscious of it in another way. He saw an enormous gap between the world of men, which is οὐδέν [nothing], and the brazen sky which is the everlasting

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[36] Ronsard will withdraw from this position in 1564 in the *Elegie à la Royne d'Escosse*, XII, 280, vv. 53-56.

[37] *Iliad*, I, 528; XVII, 209; Nem., I, 14; Isth., VIII, 45-46.

[38] The name of Zeus never occurs in Ronsard's poetry.

[39] *Pindar*, pp. 365-366; cf. p. 392.

[40] See Bowra's article on «The Proem of Parmenides», *Problems in Greek Poetry* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 38-53; it had appeared originally in *Classical Philology*, XXXII (1937), 97-112.

home of the gods (*N.*, 6, 3-4), and he could not but believe that at times this gap can be crossed, not indeed by men trying to be gods, but by gods shedding some of their strength and brightness upon men.»

The philosophers, however, were not as inattentive to the thought of Pindar as he was to the speculative aspects of philosophy. Plato, who names and quotes Pindar a number of times,[41] «tient de son milieu, de sa naissance, de ses sympathies doriennes toutes sortes d'affinités avec son devancier. Il lui est vraiment apparenté, συγγενής».[42] Poet and philosopher both felt that «l'homme ne peut réussir sans l'aide et l'inspiration divines... et leur imagination les entraîne loin d'un monde trop étroit, vers les îles fortunées où ils ont appris à situer le séjour des héros, dans la société ou la contemplation des dieux».[43]

In Aristotle's temperament as it appears in his extant philosophical works, one generally misses the element of imagination and poetry[44] that created affinities between Plato and Pindar. Nevertheless, he twice found occasion in the *Rhetoric* to quote Pindar.[45] In one of the most significant passages of the *Nicomachean Ethics*,[46] urging men to live in accordance with the divine principle within them, he takes exception to Pindar's classically Hellenic counsel of moderation, «Mortal aims befit mortal men» (Isth., V, 16), overlooking, momentarily, no doubt, how often and how intensely the poet had set his heart on the hope of some communication across the abyss that divides man from the gods. If Parmenides in his Proem, which Aristotle knew well, was philosophically «concerned with something of cosmic grandeur»,[47] the Stagirite must surely have been aware that Pindar, in the first Pythian, for example, as in the eighth, was poetically absorbed in matters of equally universal scope. «In great and noble men he expects to find a titanic drive to storm the heights of heaven, since it is part of our half-divine nature to strive ever upwards.»[48]

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[41] See Edouard Des Places, *Pindare et Platon*, pp. 169-179, esp. p. 171, where one may find a list of the citations of Pindar in Plato's dialogues.

[42] *Op. cit.*, p. 184.

[43] *Op. cit.*, pp. 184-185.

[44] But see Bowra's essay on «Aristotle's Hymn to Virtue» in *Problems in Greek Poetry*, pp. 138-150. Bowra refers to the hymn as «The remarkable poem in which Aristotle addresses 'Αρετά...» (p. 138). See also Werner Jaeger's *Aristotle*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1955), trans. Richard Robinson, pp. 106-110, for the philosopher's altar-elegy to Friendship. The elegy is translated on p. 107, the hymn to Virtue on p. 118. See below, n. 83.

[45] 1364 a 28 quoting Ol., I, 1 on the excellence of water; 1401 a 16-18, a fragment on the divinity of Pan.

[46] 1177 b 30-34.

[47] Bowra, *art. cit.*, p. 44.

[48] Fränkel, pp. 475-476; cf. p. 418 and n. 40.

Pindar's indifference, and Ronsard's, for that matter, to the professional and technical problems of the philosophic discipline as such, could not, in Aristotle's judgment, have diminished the philosophic value of their poetic insights. Quite the contrary. One of his most influential observations on poetic theory is his assertion of the superiority of poetry over history on the ground of its deeper philosophic significance: «Hence poetry is something more philosophic and of graver import than history, since its statements are of the nature rather of universals, whereas those of history are singulars.»[49]

Descartes, who had little if anything, to say about Ronsard, went even further than perhaps Aristotle would have been prepared to go in his praise of the philosophic significance of poetry. Commenting on a remark in the *Discours de la méthode*: «... j'étais amoureux de la Poésie», Etienne Gilson states, «Expression intentionnellement très forte et qui témoigne d'une vraie passion du jeune Descartes pour la lecture des poètes. (Texte latin: «non parvo Poëseos amore incendebar.») Il semble d'ailleurs avoir trouvé près d'eux plus de satisfactions, même au point de vue intellectuel, qu'auprès des philosophes, car c'est chez les poètes, dira-t-il en 1619-1620, plutôt que chez les philosophes, que sont les pensées lourdes de sens («graves sententiae»; t. X, p. 217, l. 17);[50] mais il ajoutera aussitôt, d'accord avec notre passage du *Discours*, que c'est précisément parce que les poètes se livrent à l'inspiration»[51] [*sc.* divine (?)].

However wisely and sympathetically Descartes may have written on the value of poetry in general, his reticence with respect to Ronsard is perhaps indicative of an attitude that often prevailed during the 17th and 18th centuries in France. But to pursue an inquiry into the fortune of Ronsard's poetry in this period would divert us from our present purpose and duplicate much extant research.[52] A judgment by Condillac in his *Discours de réception à l'Académie Françoise* may, however, convey some idea, by no means untypical, though not universal, of the sovereign disdain heaped upon one of France's greatest lyrists in the desiccated season of her lyric poetry: «En vain François I^er^, le protecteur des lettres, s'étoit flatté... d'en être le restaurateur. L'érudition aveugle, qui se répandoit alors en France, éteignoit le goût qui

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[49] *Poetics*, 1451 b 5-7; the translation is that of Ingram Bywater in the Oxford Aristotle.

[50] Œuvres complètes, 12 vols., 1897-1910, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery.

[51] Etienne Gilson, *René Descartes: Discours de la méthode*, texte et commentaire (1947), p. 7, line 11 and p. 124.

[52] By Max Fuchs, Joseph Vianey, Fernand Desonay, V.L. Saulnier, and Claude Pichois, among others. See Raymond Lebègue, *Ronsard*, 5th ed., (1966), Chap. XI, «La destinée posthume de Ronsard», for an excellent survey of the poet's fortune in France and abroad.

commençoit avec Marot; et les lettres ne pouvoient pas renaître dans un siècle fait pour admirer Ronsard.»[53]

In the *Hymne triumphal sur le trepas de Marguerite de Valois* (1551), which formed part of the *Tombeau* of the princess, Ronsard had already given evidence that «la langue francoyse n'est incapable de la philosophie».[54] Certain strophes of the *Hymne* demonstrate a mature understanding of the nature of the contention in the human soul between the forces of good and evil, and of the immense spiritual issues involved in the struggle.[55] Four years later, in another hymn, he professes his faith in divine Philosophie,

> D'autant que c'est la science premiere
> De qui toute autre emprunte sa lumiere.
> (VIII, 86)

It was Philosophie, he says, who first healed man of his ignorance, taught him virtue, and gave him the faculty of distinguishing good from evil (VIII, 91-92).

Henri Chamard rightly believed that the object of the *Hymne de la Philosophie* «n'est pas tant de guider l'homme vers la connaissance de Dieu et de lui-même, que de scruter la nature des êtres et que d'examiner le problème des choses... Autant dire qu'elle ['sa conception de la science philosophique'] est la science de l'univers», or, as Chamard had described it a moment earlier, «c'est une cosmologie».[56] But Ronsard's purpose by no means excluded ethical considerations from his hymn or from his conception of the province of Philosophie, who, in fact, eventually assumes the personality of Vertu (see below, sec. vii). In dedicating the poem to Odet Cardinal de Chastillon Ronsard had expressed the hope that his gift would be

> De bonne estoffe, & de valeur semblable
> A la valeur de sa Vertu loüable...
> (VIII, 86)

The hope was amply realized, for one cannot fail to see a transcendent ethical intention in the action of Philosophie who awakened the celestial affinities of

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[53] Georges Le Roy, ed., *Œuvres philosophiques de Condillac*, I (1947), 392, col. 1.

[54] The quoted words are from *Def.*, I, x, title. — About a quarter of a century later Ronsard, together with a number of colleagues at Court, would give further evidence, in their discourses before the Académie du Palais, of the philosophic maturity of the French language. One of Ronsard's contributions was *Des Vertus intellectuelles et moralles* (XVIII, 451-460), which Franchet (p. 67) described as «un chef-d'œuvre de style et de bon sens». It is discussed at some length in my article on «Ronsard's Ethical Thought», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), 358-362.

[55] See Part I, 231-232.

[56] *Hist. de la Pl.*, II, 186.

... nostre Ame emprisonnée,
Et par esprit aux astres l'a menée,
Car en dressant de nostre Ame les yeux,
Haute, s'attache aux merveilles des Cieux,
Vaguant par tout, & sans estre lassée
Tout l'Univers discourt en sa pensée,
Et seulle peut des astres s'alïer
Osant de DIEU la nature espïer.
(VIII, 86-87)

Cruelly misunderstood at the outset of his career, half-forgotten for two centuries after his death, Ronsard was nevertheless fortunate in attaining among his more thoughtful readers an early and lasting renown until the advent of Malherbe and Boileau. Montaigne, for example, had a surer taste than either of these when in 1579 or 1580 he wrote in his essay «De l'institution des enfans», and again in «De la præsumption», words of praise for Ronsard and Du Bellay that placed them not only in the forefront of the great flight of poets of their time, but «guieres esloignez de la perfection ancienne».[57]

In the «Apologie de Raimond Sebond» Montaigne rejects the notion of «une religion purement mentale, sans objet prefix et sans meslange materiel» in which «l'esprit humain ne se sçauroit maintenir vaguant en cet infini de pensées informes».[58] He therefore finds much to commend in a passage of Ronsard's *Remonstrance au peuple de France*, where the poet, «Voyant la Chrestienté n'estre plus que risée» (v. 59), states that if he did not have a firm religious faith he would become a worshipper of the Sun. Montaigne quotes in full this hymn to the Sun, as Laumonier calls it (XI, 67, n. 1), which the essayist introduces with an observation that speaks highly for the lucidity of Ronsard's vision: «... parmy cette cecité universelle, je me fusse, ce me semble, plus volontiers attaché à ceux qui adoroient le Soleil,

la lumiere commune,
L'œil du monde; et si Dieu au chef porte des yeux,
Les rayons du Soleil sont ses yeux radieux,
Qui donnent vie à tous, nous maintiennent et gardent,
Et les faicts des humains en ce monde regardent:
Ce beau, ce grand soleil qui nous faict les saisons,
Selon qu'il entre ou sort de ses douze maisons;[59]
Qui remplit l'univers de ses vertus connues;
Qui, d'un traict de ses yeux, nous dissipe les nues:
L'esprit, l'ame du monde, ardant et flamboyant,
En la course d'un jour tout le Ciel tournoyant;
Plein d'immense grandeur, rond, vagabond et ferme;
Lequel tient dessoubs luy tout le monde pour terme;

[57] Villey-Saulnier edition, pp. 171, 661.

[58] *Ed. cit.*, p. 513.

[59] Cf. VIII, 158, v. 192; 251, v. 78, variant of 1587.

En repos sans repos; oysif, et sans sejour;
Fils aisné de nature et le pere du jour.»[60]

Montaigne may have anticipated, possibly suggested, Descartes' assertion, as he had a number of others,[61] that it is in poetry rather than in philosophy that one finds «les pensées lourdes de sens». He writes in «De l'institution des enfans», «L'Histoire, c'est plus mon gibier, ou la poësie, que j'ayme d'une particuliere inclination. (Cf. above, Descartes' «j'étais amoureux de la Poésie»). Car, comme disoit Cleantes, tout aussi que la voix, contrainte dans l'étroit canal d'une trompette, sort plus aigüe et plus forte, ainsi me semble il que la sentence,[62] pressée aux pieds nombreux de la poësie, s'eslance bien plus brusquement et me fiert d'une plus vive secousse».[63]

The metrical advantage of poetry is not, however, for Montaigne, its sole or its primary superiority. Rather, as Descartes also was to affirm, its preeminence lay in its inspired origin. «Les saillies poëtiques», Montaigne writes in the essay «Divers evenemens de mesme conseil», «qui emportent leur autheur et le ravissent hors de soy, pourquoy ne les attribuerons nous à son bon heur? puis qu'il confesse luy mesme qu'elles surpassent sa suffisance et ses forces, et les reconnoit venir d'ailleurs que de soy, et ne les avoir aucunement en sa puissance...»[64]

Montaigne could hardly have written differently if he had just come from reading certain verses of Ronsard's *A Monsieur de Belot*, 1569, which became *La Lyre* in 1584. The poet, writing of his labors in the vineyard, celebrates the god of the vine, «Bacchus [qui] rejouïst l'homme» (v. 41), and the other divinities who share with Bacchus the power of inspiration:

Il a rendu salaire à mon labeur,
De sa fureur me remplissant le cœur,
Car, comme dit ce grand Platon, ce sage,
Quatre fureurs brulent nostre courage,
Bacchus, Amour, les Muses, Apollon,
Qui dans nos cœurs laissent un aiguillon
Comme freslons, & d'une ardeur segrette
Font soudain l'homme & poëte & prophette.

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[60] I reproduce Montaigne's text of these verses in the Villey-Saulnier edition, p. 514. It differs in insignificant details from that of Laumonier, XI, 66-67.

[61] See Léon Brunschvicg, *Descartes et Pascal, lecteurs de Montaigne*, (Neuchâtel, 1942).

[62] The note in the Villey-Saulnier edition (p. 146, n. 11) explains *sentence* as *phrase*. None of the numerous occurrences of *sentence* in Villey's *Lexique de la langue des Essais* give this meaning. The four definitions given — *opinion, jugement, pensée digne d'attention, maxime* — emphasize the intellectual substance of the word. This equates Montaigne's *sentence* exactly with Descartes' «pensées lourdes de sens» and with his «graves sententiae».

[63] *Ed. cit.*, p. 146.

[64] *Ed. cit.*, p. 127.

Par eux je vois que poëte je suis
Bien né, gaillard: car faire je ne puis
Un trait de vers soit qu'un Prince commande,
Soit qu'une Dame ou l'Amy m'en demande,
Et à tous coups la fureur ne me prend,
Je bée en vain, & mon Esprit attend
Tantost six mois, tantost un an, sans faire
Vers qui me puisse ou plaire ou satisfaire.
J'attends venir (certes je n'en ments point)
Cette fureur qui la Sybile espoint:
Mais aussi tost que par long intervalle
Dedans mon cœur du Ciel elle devalle,
Colere, ardent, furieux, agité,
Je tramble tout soubz la divinité...
(XV, 18-19)

In Montaigne's view philosophy owed a fundamental debt to poetry: «Et certes», he says in the *Apologie*, «la philosophie n'est qu'une poësie sophistiquée.[65] D'où tirent ces auteurs anciens toutes leurs authoritez, que des poëtes? Et les premiers furent poëtes eux mesmes et la traicterent[66] en leur art. Platon n'est qu'un poëte descousu.»[67]

When Montaigne returns to Plato and poetry in «De la vanité», he derives philosophy from poetry even more explicitly than in his earlier essays. Plato, he says, «est tout poëtique, et la vieille théologie poësie, disent les sçavants, et la premiere philosophie. C'est l'originel langage des Dieux».[68] For both poet and philosopher, and more truly for writers who in varying degrees possessed the characteristics of both, Montaigne's «ailleurs que de soy» could only be the inspiring divinity.

V. Trees that Flourish in Evil or in Good; Theodicy

«Pindar was the first to make the triumphal hymn a sort of religious poem... he gave a definite moral and religious significance to the spectacle of men struggling to bring their manhood to perfection in victory; and thereby he created a new type of lyric... he made it... into praise of the prowess which is a pattern for posterity... for it was victory which always demanded the song. The foundation of his poetry was this concentration upon a perma-

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[65] Pierre Villey's *Lexique de la langue des Essais* defines *sophistiqué* as *dénaturé, artificiel*, and quotes as the primary example this passage of the *Apologie*.

[66] Villey, *op. cit.*, s.v. *trai*[c]*ter, traitter*, 5, defines *traiter la poésie* as *la mettre en œuvre*.

[67] *Ed. cit.*, p. 537. — I take *descousu* to mean free of metrical constraints.

[68] *Ed. cit.*, p. 995.

nent standard... Areta... triumphant in victory... demands to be made eternal in the song of the poet.»[69]

Pindar's ethical reflections were, of course, not limited to circumstances related to the Games, though the athletic contests generally furnished the occasion for them[70] He half evades, half faces the problem of the prosperity that attends the actions of the wicked, while the just are left to console themselves with the bleak rewards of virtue.[71] Nor was he the first of Hellenic poets to be perplexed by this disturbing question. «The Greeks were not so unrealistic as to hide from themselves the plain fact that the wicked flourished like a green bay-tree.[72] Hesiod, Solon, Pindar, are deeply troubled by it, and Theognis finds it necessary to give Zeus a straight talk on the subject.»[73]

Pindar did not share the sometimes embittered pessimism of a Theognis. He had witnessed the thriving of qualities to which the wicked are strangers, and by a surprising coincidence he too had expressed his vision in an image, how different from that of the Psalmist! of a flourishing tree. Instead of a «straight talk» to Zeus, Pindar utters this prayer:

> Oh! Father Zeus... may I cleave to the guileless path
> of life!
> So that after death I may attach to my children a reputation
> untouchèd by evil word.
> Men pray for gold, others for boundless land;
> My prayer is that I may give pleasure to my
> fellow-citizens,
> Praising what meriteth praise, and on sinners strewing
> blame,
> Until I wrap my limbs in earth.
> As when a tree, nourished by the fresh dews of heaven,
> shooteth aloft,
> Even so virtue waxeth, rearèd on high into the liquid
> air, in the judgment of the wise and just of men.
>
> (Nem., VIII, 35-42, trans. Farnell)

In the penultimate verse Pindar rejoins the Psalmist (I, 3), in harmony with him now both in imagery and in meaning: «And he [the virtuous man] shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.» The first words of the final verse of Pindar's prayer to Zeus translate the words αὔξεται δ'ἀρετά. By equating ἀρετά with *virtue*, rather than with

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[69] *Paideia*, I, 209-210; cf. Marrou, p. 78.

[70] Gildersleeve, p. xxiii.

[71] Frag. 213, p. 611; cf. Pyth., IV, 139-140.

[72] See Psalms, XXXVII, 35.

[73] E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, p. 33; Theognis' «straight talk» may be found in J.M. Edmonds (*ed. cit.*, above, n. 8), I, 316-319).

prowess or *excellence*, Farnell, like other translators,[74] has given an ethical sense to ἀρετά, persuaded to do so, no doubt, by the inconstestably ethical nature of the entire passage.

Ronsard's *Epitafe d'André Blondet* (1560) begins, like Pindar's sixth Nemean ode, and like his own ode *Au reverendissime Cardinal du Bellai* (II, 120), by sharply distinguishing between the race of the immortal gods and the race of ephemeral man.[75] In the *Epitafe*, however, he omits all reference to the common descent of the gods and men from one mother, Earth. His mind is occupied with a different problem, the one that had agitated the thoughts of some of the earliest poets of Greece: how to justify the ways of God to man, how to explain the existence of evil in a world created by a presumably beneficent God. He seems to dissimulate his questioning of divine justice by directing his accusation against Nature:

A tout le moins si nature honorable
Eust ordonné d'arrest irrevocable
Que les meschans mourroyent tant seullement,
Vivant les bons perpetuellement,
Quelque confort auroit nostre misere,
Et la nature à bon droict seroit mere.[76]
Mais quand lon voit les meschans si long temps
Vivre gaillards au terme de cent ans,
Sans amander leur malice premiere,
Et que l'on voit les bons ne vivre guere,
L'humanité de l'homme, soucieux
De s'enquerir, en accuse les cieux.
Las! qui verroit dans un gras labourage
Tomber du ciel le mal'heureux orage,
Qui d'une gresle, & d'un vent jusqu'au fond
Perdroit les bleds qui ja grandets se font...
Qui est celuy tant soit constant de cœur,
Qui n'acusast la celeste rigueur,
Et n'esbranlast contre le ciel la teste
D'avoir rué une telle tempeste?[77]
(X, 310-311)

Verses 54, 66, and 67 would suffice to establish that Nature is not the sole object of Ronsard's indictment. The brief theodicy that follows immediately makes it clear that behind Nature and above the heavens Ronsard beholds God as the responsible source of the incomprehensible calamities that afflict

[74] Henri Estienne, Myers, Puech.

[75] Cf. Part I, pp. 303-304.

[76] «Considérée comme une mère.» Note by Laumonier.

[77] «Toute la question du mal physique, moral et métaphysique est ici posée. Si Deus est, unde malum? A quoi les spiritualistes répondaient: Si non est, unde bonum?» Note by Laumonier.

the world, but affirms with acquiescent resignation that whatever befalls is divinely determined for the good of mankind:

> Or toutesfois conformer il nous fault
> Au sainct vouloir du grand Dieu de là hault,
> Qui des mortelz à son vouloir dispose,
> Et pour le mieulx ordonne toute chose...
> (X, 311)

The thought, of course, is one of the most enduring commonplaces of literature and religion. It would be absurd to single out any author as the source of an idea that is present, in assent or rejection, in every age and in almost every mind, no matter what the professed religion may be. «Perhaps the most famous of [Pindar's] sentiments about the Godhead is in the second *Pythian* [49]: 'God accomplishes every end according to his expectation; God, who overtaketh even the winged eagle and outstrippeth the dolphin of the sea, and bringeth many a proud man low, vouchsafing to others renown that grows not old.' Pindar never wearies of reminding his readers that the Gods are the authors of whatsoever good or evil happens to mankind... 'It is God', the poet says, 'who accomplishes all things for mortal men.'»[78]

In the *Discours à la Royne* (1562) Ronsard seeks a rational explanation for the presence of evil in the world. His theodicy undergoes a significant modification. It no longer rests on the inscrutable will of God. Instead he advances a theory of a constantly changing but relatively stable balance of vice and virtue in mankind and, inferentially, in world history. He seems to suggest that God places man between good and evil as a means of compelling him to exercise his freedom of will in making salutary ethical choices (XI, 19, vv. 1-24).

The remarkable nineteenth sonnet of the first book of the *Sonets pour Helene* is an affirmation of the role of the intellect in guiding man toward those rational choices:

> Chef, escole des arts, le sejour de science,
> Où vit un intellect, qui foy du Ciel nous fait,
> Une heureuse memoire, un jugement parfait,
> D'où Pallas reprendroit sa seconde naissance:
>
> Chef, le logis d'honneur, de vertu, de prudence,
> Ennemy capital du vice contrefait...
> (XVIII, 212)

[78] James Adam, *The Religious Teachers of Greece*, p. 118, cf. pp. 120, 127-128; the last quotation is from frag. 141 (Sandys, p. 600).

VI. Definitions of *Areté* and *Vertu*

In Ronsard's autobiographical poem to Pierre de Paschal we read in the princeps edition (1554):

> Et à peine seize ans avoient borné mon age,
> Que l'an cinq cens quarante avec Baïf je vins
> En la haute Alemaigne, où la langue j'aprins.
> (VI, 68)

The poet did not revise this passage until 1585 when he was preparing what became the first posthumous edition. There one reads:

> En la haute Allemaigne, où dessous luy [Baïf] j'apprins
> Combien peut la vertu...
> (*S.*, V, 284)

It is not easy to know exactly what *vertu*, in this context, meant for Ronsard. Was he referring to Lazare de Baïf as a model of ethical principle, diplomatic astuteness, humanistic doctrine, or poetic sensitivity? None of these possibilities can be certainly excluded.[79] In his mind Ronsard may have given greater weight to one or another of them, or assigned equal importance to all. We whall never surely know — the word *vertu*, like the word *areté*, is by nature too ambiguous.[80] If an attempt to distinguish the various meanings of these words for Ronsard and Pindar respectively has been deferred until now, the reason was that their occurrences in a variety of contexts and equivocal connotations in the preceding pages would of themselves, I believed, underscore the necessity of attempting to discern their protean significances.

In his *Lexicon to Pindar* William J. Slater analyzes the poet's understanding of the meanings of ἀρετά, in approximately four score passages in the odes and fragments, under four categories: «a) *distinction, talent, excellence,*[81] rarely of purely moral qualities... b) esp. *physical excellence, valour, prowess*... c) reputation, renown for prowess, *glory*... d) pl. *deeds of prowess, achievements, exploits.*»

These definitions seem to minimize, but not exclude, the presence of moral qualities in *areté*. Is it genuinely possible to conceive of valor and prowess, of glory and achievements, of human excellence in any significant

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[79] See *TFI*, pp. 31-34.

[80] The ambiguity of *areté* led Norwood (p. 49) to describe it as «the translator's despair».

[81] According to Pierre Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, I, 107, ἀρετή signifies «'excellence, valeur', surtout, chez Hom., en parlant de l'homme, du guerrier, qualités du corps ou du cœur; plus tard, 'mérite, valeur' en général...» — Cf. *RGL*, Part I, pp. 193-194 and n. 34; p. 285 and n. 42.

endeavor, in the absence of a moral structure? Croiset's definition of *areté* (p. 226), drawn from many passages in Pindar, gives the answer to this question: «Quant à la vertu, les odes triomphales en sont un perpétuel éloge. La vertu que chante Pindare, c'est la vertu dans le sens antique de ce mot,[82] c'est-à-dire l'ensemble des qualités de l'âme et de celles du corps, avec l'idée prédominante de la force, considérée moralement et physiquement comme le privilège de la virilité. La vertu de l'homme appelle la faveur des dieux. Peu d'hommes ont obtenu le bonheur sans peine. La gloire est le prix de la lutte et de l'effort. Les vertus que le péril n'a pas éprouvées sont sans honneur... Dans tous les cas, 'il faut marcher droit, et lutter de toutes ses forces'.»

In creating this definition of *areté*, Croiset has shown, perhaps unawares, how thoroughly Pindar had anticipated the ethical essence of Aristotle's «Hymn to Virtue».[83] Poet and philosopher were sons of Hellas who had understood, in spite of its ambiguities, «le sens antique de ce mot».

The words *vertu* and *vertueux* are found many hundreds of times in the works of Ronsard.[84] I shall not attempt the infinitely tedious task of examining the passages in which they occur. In the absence of a lexicon of Ronsard comparable to Pierre Villey's *Lexique de la langue des Essais de Montaigne*,[85] one may assume that Edmond Huguet's *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle* has recorded most of the fundamental meanings of *vertu*, which are given as follows: *force, courage, vaillance, talent, propriété* [in the sense of *characteristic*], *pouvoir*,[86] *qualité*.[87] It is true, however, that Huguet's definition tends to slight the ethical values of *vertu*, since, as he states in the preface (I, p. xxi), «ce qui n'existe plus... sera le principal élément de ce dictionnaire». Randle Cotgrave's *Dictionarie of the French and English Ton-*

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[82] «'Αρετά.» Note by Croiset.

[83] See above, n. 44. The «Hymn to Virtue» was written in honor of Hermias, tyrant of Atarneus, an intimate friend of Aristotle, and a student, like him, of the Academy. Hermias was treacherously seized at a conference to which he had been invited by the Persian general Mentor, and sent to Susa where he was crucified after refusing under torture to reveal the nature of his secret treaties with King Philip of Macedon. See W. Jaeger, *Aristotle*, pp. 117-118.

[84] Creore counts more than 800 occurrences of *vertu*, more than 70 of *vertueux*.

[85] L. Mellerio's *Lexique de Ronsard* (1895) is in general quite inadequate. One vainly seeks in it the word *vertu*. In his personal copy of Mellerio (p. 243), Paul Laumonier had introduced *vertueux* defined as *efficace, puissant* on the basis of a verse in the *Complainte de Glauce à Scylle nymphe* (*L.*, II, 58, v. 24). Ch. Marty-Laveaux's *Langue de la Pléiade* ignores the word.

[86] In *Pensées*, 55, Pascal refers to the «Vertu *apéritive* d'une clé, *attractive* d'un croc». Léon Brunschvicg, ed., *Opuscules et Pensées*, (1897), p. 340 (emphasis in text).

[87] Huguet quotes only one example of Ronsard's use of *vertu*, none of *vertueux*.

gues gives them greater prominence: *virtue, goodnesse, honestie, sinceritie, integritie; worth, perfection, desert, merit...*[88]

VII. Ethical Values of *Areté* and *Vertu*[89]

In the following study of a number of passages in the writings of Pindar and Ronsard I have sought to include only those in which the words *areté* and *vertu* have a transparently ethical value, and have excluded not only those from which such a value is absent, but also those in which its presence could reasonably be inferred, but might be considered debatable.

The fifth Pythian opens with praise for Arcesilas, King of Cyrene: «Wide is the power of wealth, whenever it is wedded with stainless honour [ἀρετᾷ καθαρᾷ]... thou, while thou walkest in the straight path [ἐν δίκᾳ — *lit.* in justice], hast prosperity in abundance around thee.» In the seventh Olympian for Diagoras of Rhodes one reads, «Now it is Reverence, daughter of Forethought, that implanteth in men high merit [ἀρετὰν] and its attendant joys» (43-44).[90]

The first Pythian, whose initial triads, performed to the music of Apollo's golden lyre, portray a cosmic victory of the forces of good over evil, concludes with a human contrast that carries the mind back to the significance of the prelude: «The kindly generosity [ἀρετά] of Croesus fadeth not away, while Phalaris, ruthless in spirit, who burned his victims in his brazen bull, is whelmed forever by a hateful infamy, and no lyres... welcome him» (94-98). The sixth Pythian narrates how Antilochus came to the aid of his father Nestor, in imminent danger of being slain by Memnon: «... the godlike son bought with his own life the rescue of his father, and, by doing this wondrous deed, was deemed... to have proved himself... supreme in filial devotion [ἀρετάν]» (36-42).

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[88] I omit the rest of Cotgrave's definition which parallels that of Huguet. — Jean Nicot's *Thresor de la langue francoise* (1621), though it lists many examples of typical uses of *vertu*, offers no definition of it.

[89] This section may appear by its title to be somewhat redundant with Chapter XXI, section vi, «Ethics and Poetry in Pindar». In reality, there is no duplication — the earlier section attempts little more than to show inconsistency in Gilbert Norwood's position that Pindar's poetry had no concern with ethics.

[90] «C'est en respectant Prométhée que les hommes trouvent la vertu et la joie» (trans. Puech). «Respect for forethought puts on men goodliness and delight also» (trans. Lattimore). «Due Observance, born of Forethought, bringeth to mortals Virtue and the joys of Victory» (trans. Farnell).

Ronsard has left us several poems in which the components of *vertu* are clearly if rather dogmatically stated, though the word is, of course, not formally defined.

The theme of the first 32 verses of the 1554 *Odelette à Jan de Pardaillan Panjas le jeune* (VI, 116-118) is announced almost at once: «De tous les animaux qui vivent sur la terre L'homme est le plus chetif...» (vv. 5-6). But Pardaillan is an exception, for he is «bien né pour connoistre Que c'est de la vertu... Ayant sans plus ton cœur de la vertu ravi» (vv. 34-35, 39). In Pardaillan's *vertu* Ronsard finds a ready mind, soundness of reason, contempt for worldly matters, equanimity, prudence, constancy, and a willingness to follow good example (vv. 33-40).

A year later, in the *Ode à Louys de Ronsard son neveu* (VI, 194-195) the poet composed for the young man what Franchet has called «une institution de vertu» (p. 64). The word itself occurs only in the exhortation of the first verse: «Mon nepveu, suy la vertu.» The ode is dense with Polonian advice from which Ronsard's notion of the essential characteristics of a virtuous person may be easily deduced: He must be eager for knowledge, courteous and loving, courageous, magnanimous, energetic, devoted to the service of the king, obedient to law, truthful, continent, sober, and prudent. Well might Ronsard add in the last two verses that his nephew would do no wrong if he were faithful to these precepts — such a conclusion must surely «follow as the night the day».

In all of this we are quite remote from Pindar's manner of alluding to *aretá*. In his odes there is no deliberate «institution de vertu». Instinctively he understood, as indeed Ronsard himself almost always did, that those who heard or read him, if they were to learn from his songs, must do so spontaneously, without instruction from the poet.

In the *Hymne de la Philosophie* (1555) we witness a transformation of the personified abstraction of Philosophie into an equivalent abstraction of Vertu. The metamorphosis was perhaps not premeditated, but it is not quite as sudden as Laumonier has suggested (VIII, 97, n. 1). Ronsard's intention in dedicating the hymn to Odet Cardinal de Chastillon was to present him with a gift comparable «A la valeur de sa Vertu loüable» (VIII, 86). In the course of her cosmological voyage Philosophie visits both Hades and the Elysian Fields where she beholds first the evildoers and their punishments, Ixion, Tityus, and Sisyphus, then, «... des Ames prisées Les beaux sejours aux plaines Elysées» (VIII, 92-93).

Before completing her progress through the universe Philosophie

167 ... vint revisiter les Villes,
Et leur donna des polices civiles,
Pour les regir par Justice, & par Loix:
Car pour neant on eust quitté les bois,

Et les desers, où le peuple sauvage
Vivoit jadis, si l'on eust d'avantage
Qu'entre les bois trouvé dans les citez
Plus de pechez par faute d'equitez,
Et de statuz à faire la Justice
Pour vivre en paix, loing de meurdre, & de vice.
(VIII, 95-96)

The transformation of Philosophie into Vertu begins after the gift of civilization and law to human societies:

Apres avoir d'un jugement divers
En tous endroitz pratiqué l'Univers,
Et clairement aux hommes fait entendre
Ce qu'ilz pouvoient, sans estre Dieux, comprendre,
Pour mieux se faire, avec peine, chercher,
S'alla loger sur le haut d'un Rocher.
(VIII, 96-97)

It is with this act that Philosophie begins to become indistinguishable from Vertu, who in the end will prove to be the *raison d'être* of philosophic endeavor. That will not occur, however, until the last year of Ronsard's life and in the last verse of the hymn. The allegorical ascent to a lofty mountain top which Philosophie has just accomplished was suggested to Ronsard by a passage in Hesiod's *Works and Days*: «... between us and Goodness [ἀρετῆς][91] the gods have placed the sweat of our brows: long and steep is the path that leads to her, and it is rough at the first; but when a man has reached the top, then indeed she is easy...» (289-292).

Ronsard's paraphrase, of which I give a much abridged version, greatly amplifies Hesiod's brief text:

Dans une plaine, est une haute Roche.[92]
D'où, nul vivant, sans grand travail n'aproche:
Car le sentier en est facheux, & droit,
Dur, rabboteux, espineux, & estroit...
Au bas du Roc est un creux precipice
Qui faict horreur à l'homme plain de vice
Qui veut monter avant qu'estre purgé
De son peché, dont il estoit chargé...

[91] Basing his judgment on Hesiod's intention in the *Works and Days* to show his hearers «the value of work», Jaeger (*Paideia*, I, 70), believes that *areté* does not here signify the moral quality of virtue, but rather «welfare, success, repute». This is very probably the case, but it must not influence our reading of the Hesiodic passage in the *Hymne de la Philosophie*, where Ronsard has obviously employed *vertu* in an ethical sense.

[92] The periods here and at the end of v. 223 seem to interrupt the sense. The 1578 text in the edition of Vaganay (VI, 113) has a comma at the end of each of these verses; the first collective edition of 1560 (IV, ff. 76 v° and 77 r°) has no punctuation after *Roche*, a comma after *travaille*.

Là, sur le Roc cette PHILOSOPHIE
Pour tout jamais son palais edifie
A murs d'erain, loing des ennuiz mondains,
Et des souciz, dont les hommes sont plains...
(VIII, 97-98)

In the following verses the movement toward the assimilation of Philosophie and Vertu takes a further step and the ethical value assigned to Vertu is placed beyond a doubt:

Là, font la garde au tour de sa maison
Ainsi qu'archers, Jugement, & Raison,
Et la Suëur, qui se tient à la porte,
Et dans ses mains une couronne porte
De verd Laurier, pour le digne loyer
De qui se veut aux Vertuz emploïer.
Là, sans repos, la Verité travaille.
Et, bien-armée à toute heure bataille
Contre Ignorance, & contre Vanité,
Contre Paresse, & contre Volupté
Pour leur defendre obstinément l'approche
Et le moyen de monter sur la Roche.
(VIII, 98)

Finally the distinction between Philosophie and Vertu is totally abolished. A vast concourse of people attempts the ascent but is prevented from reaching the mountain peak by

une horrible tempeste
D'Ambicions, d'Envie, & de Plaisirs,
De Voluptez, & de mondains Desirs, [qui]
Les font broncher, d'une longue traverse
Cul par sus teste à bas, à la renverse
Dans un torrent: car, certes, il ne faut
«Penser gravir legerement en haut
«Où la Vertu en son Temple repose,
«Sans decharger son cœur de toute chose
«Qui soit mondaine...
(VIII, 99)

With v. 247 the identification of Philosophie with Vertu is consummated. The bronze palace of Philosophie has become a temple, and to the positive characteristics by which Ronsard had earlier defined the nature of *vertu* are now added the negative ones that must be avoided if one is to attain the serenity of a genuinely ethical life such as the Cardinal de Chastillon has reached. From the summit on which he dwells his compassion urges the seekers of wisdom to follow

Non par le trac du grand chemin batu
Du peuple sot, ains par l'estroite voye
Qui l'homme sage à la Vertu convoye.
(VIII, 100)

The figure of Vertu pre-empts the scene until the end of the hymn, when Ronsard returns to Philosophie as though suddenly aware that he had abandoned her in mid-course:

Je te salue ô grand PHILOSOPHIE:
Quiconque soit cettuy-là qui se fie
En tes propos, d'un courage constant,
Vivra tousjours bien-heureux & content,
Sans craindre rien, comme celuy qui pense
Que de nul mal la Vertu ne s'offence.
(VIII, 102)

The last verse proves that for Ronsard, in 1555, at any rate, the two abstractions remain indistinguishable. It is not until the edition of 1587 that *vertu*, in the definitive version of the *Hymne de la Philosophie*, becomes the principle and the end of philosophic activity, for the final verse was then transformed to read:

«Que la vertu seule est sa recompense.
(*S.*, VI, 148)

Five years after the publication of the *Hymne de la Philosophie* Ronsard, in *La Vertu amoureuse à tresillustre prelat Hieronyme de la Rovere* (X, 337-348), returned in a vision to the Hesiodic account of *areté* dwelling upon her almost unattainable mountain peak. In the interval, no distinction seems to have arisen in his mind between the abstract personifications of Philosophie and Vertu — they are apparently interchangeable. Vertu now occupies the summit, and the bronze palace of Philosophie is now the bronze temple of Vertu (vv. 11-14). One of the guardians of Philosophie had been «la Suëur», an exact reminiscence of Hesiod (*WD*, 289); she is found again seated with other personified spirits at the right hand of «la Vertu amoureuse» (vv. 19-22).

Jerôme de la Rovère succeeds in reaching her lofty height in spite of the immense difficulties that make the ascent impossible for the multitude. Vertu greets him with these words:

Songneux, tu as cherché la place où je demeure,
Où tu es arrivé par cent mille travaulx,
Par rochers, par torrens, par pleines, & par vaulx,
Par halliers, & buissons, qui les autres retiennent...
(X, 340)

But these difficulties are as nothing compared to another that La Rovère had to vanquish before reaching Vertu's side — her rival, Volupté, who dwells in a flowering, springtime meadow (vv. 81, 154-155) at the base of the mountain, and who is thus described by Vertu:

Son front est attrayant, sa peau tendre & douillette,
Son œil traitre & lascif, sa face vermeillette,

Et ses cheveux ondez, annelez, & tressez,
Sont de fueilles de myrthe & de rose enlassez,
Sa main est molle & grasse, & son œil n'abandonne
Le sommeil paresseux que midy ne rayonne:
Au reste elle est en dance, en festine, & deduict[93]
Et rien fors le plaisir, indiscrette, ne suit,
Empoint & decoupée,[94] & pour estre apparente
Elle a desja vendu le meilleur de sa rente.[95]
(X, 341)

Vertu reminds La Rovère of the words addressed by Volupté to all who intend to make the arduous spiritual ascent:

O pauvres abusez, que le nom de Vertu
Ha fausement seduictz, pauvre peuple vestu
D'une robbe de boue, à laquelle Nature
Trop chiche n'a donné sinon la pourriture,
Vous penseriez vous bien de mortelz faire dieux?
Et de terre chargez voller jusques aux cieulx?
Laissez moy ces dessains qui ne sont que mensonges,
Que chimeres en l'air, que fables, & que songes,
Et mortelz n'esperez sinon que le trespas,
Qui est vostre heritage, & vous suit pas à pas.[96]
(X, 342-343)

Vertu congratulates La Rovère for having resisted the blandishments of Volupté and welcomes him warmly into her fellowship:

Doncques tu m'as aymé pour l'amour de moymesme,
Sans espoir de loyer:[97] aussi d'amour extreme
Je t'aime en recompense, & n'auras en retour
De m'aymer de bon cueur sinon que mon amour.
(X, 345)

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[93] «Divertissement.» Note by Laumonier.

[94] «Elle est richement vêtue et porte d'élégantes robes à 'crevés'.» Note by Laumonier, who seems to take *empoint* as the antonym of *mal empoint*.

[95] «Cette description de la Volupté semble empruntée à l'apologue de Prodicos de Céos, raconté par Xénophon, *Mémor.*, II, i, 21 sqq. (v. notamment le § 22); d'autant plus que Ronsard met en scène et fait parler la Vertu et la Volupté à l'exemple de Xénophon.» Note by Laumonier. — Cf. above, Chap. XXI, sec. v.

[96] This passage, unlike vv. 85-94, has little in common with the words of Prodicus as reported by Xenophon. Verses 116-117, for example, are strongly reminiscent of a thought expressed by Pindar in the 11th Nemean on the occasion of the installation of Aristagoras of Tenedos as President of the Council: that a man of wealth, beauty, and courage must nevertheless remember that in the end «he will be clad in a vesture of clay» (13-16). Similarly, vv. 119-120 and 123-124 reproduce admonitions that are frequently heard in the odes of Pindar and in ancient Greek authors generally, but are absent from Prodicus' account of Heracles at the crossroads.

[97] «Sans espoir de récompense.» Note by Laumonier.

«Sans espoir de loyer.» In these words Vertu reveals the inner essence of ethical value and states the immovable principle of ethical actions: they must be undertaken and accomplished for their own sake, they are vitiated and thwarted of their ideal end by any expectation of reward. Ronsard here foreshadows what would become a quarter of a century later the final variant of the hymn to Philosophie-[Vertu]: «Que la vertu seule est sa recompense.» The man who can live in accordance with this exacting doctrine,

208 tout envelopé d'immobiles raisons
S'enferme d'un rempart clos de philosophie,
Qui meprise le temps & Fortune defie.[98]

Just as Pindar was indifferent to the discovery of a philosophic formulation of the problem of the nature of appearance and reality, so he never sought to isolate in philosophic terms the essential nature of ethical value. But in his reflections on gods, heroes, and men, the effort to define that principle in representations of their actions was never long absent from his mind. His rejection or rectification of the gross myths concerning the gods and heroes is a clear indication of his movement toward a purified ethics for mankind and a more elevated understanding of the nature of divinity. The rescue of Nestor by Antilochus at the cost of his life was a spontaneous, unpremeditated example of ethical principle asserting itself irresistibly in the absence of any notion of reward. The self-sacrifice of Polydeuces in favor of Castor is perhaps an even more striking example precisely because it was not so completely unpremeditated as that of Antilochus, and because the actions of both the hero and of Zeus, his father, attain what would seem to be the highest level toward which ethical principle can point, and from there ascends even higher, since the desired reward is a privation for both father and son, and for that reason the most sublime of fulfillments.

Jacqueline Duchemin (pp. 180-181) has expressed this in words incomparable for their penetrating insight — intellectual, emotional, ethical: «Peu d'accents sont aussi émouvants que ceux de cette plainte [de Pollux à Zeus], et le poète est mû par une inspiration très haute, qui nous montre Pollux dédaignant la vie et même la gloire s'il ne peut plus les partager avec son frère. Son idéal dépasse ici celui du héros; il dépasse même celui du guerrier ami des hommes et destructeur des monstres. Les barrières de l'égoïsme sont abolies, et les contradictions inhérentes à la fragmentation de la vie en de multiples individualités se résolvent en une immense aspiration de fraternité humaine et divine: la distinction, par la volonté de Zeus, va être effacée entre la souche humaine et la souche divine...»

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[98] Several pages of my article on «Ronsard's Ethical Thought» are devoted to an analysis of his discourse *Des Vertus intellectuelles et moralles* before the Académie du Palais, c. 1576.

VIII. *Areté* and *Vertu*: «L'énergie créatrice de poésie»[99]

> «Il y a une inévitable médiocrité dans tout monnayage... de la grandeur poétique.» Marrou, p. 255.[100]

«No one in history has attributed to poetry an importance such as Pindar has given it. For him poetry gives the world its ultimate perfection. When Zeus instituted the order of the cosmos and when the Olympian gods came into being, he asked them (frag. 31)[101] whether there was still something missing. Then they beseeched him to create gods who would praise the magnificent achievements and the cosmic order in words and music. Such self-confidence on the part of Pindar and such pretensions are not vain... Pindar is justifiably elated by his intellectual achievement and his success in earning a worthy reputation among a public that he had educated to accept exalted pretensions.»[102]

In the prelude of the fourth Nemean Pindar says, not without pride in his poetic mission, «Longer than deeds liveth the word» (6). The assertion is followed at once with a characteristic prayer: «Such a word may it be mine to set forth, in honour of Zeus, the son of Cronus, in honour also of Nemea and the wrestling-match of Timasarchus, as a triumphant prelude to my song» (9-11).

Both the assertion and the prayer were perhaps essential not only as the prelude of a victory ode, but as foreshadowing a later passage in the same ode in which Pindar defends his manner of writing against criticisms expres-

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[99] The quoted phrase is from Laumonier's comment on the second quatrain of Ronsard's sonnet *Morne de corps...* from the *Amours* of 1553 for Cassandre:

> Mais aussi tôt, que de vous je m'épris,
> Tout aussi tôt vôtre œil me fut escorte
> A la vertu, voire de telle sorte
> Que d'ignorant je devin bien apris.

On these verses Laumonier wrote, V, 131, n. 1: «Bien que souvent... Ronsard parle de l'influence moralisante de l'amour, il s'agit ici de son influence esthétique, et il faut entendre par 'vertu' l'énergie créatrice de poésie, tout le contexte l'indique.»

[100] I have generalized Marrou's observation by omitting the term *scolaire* after *monnayage*. The latter word, of course, is intended metaphorically to suggest rather forcibly the impertinence of any ethical, political, social, or religious interpretation *not intended by the poet*, who remains free, it goes without saying, to write a political *Institution* for the prince, or an admonitory poem for the prince's ethical guidance. — The theme of the present section was briefly anticipated in Part I, p. 285, the second half of n. 42.

[101] Bruno Snell, ed., *Pindarus, Carmina cum fragmentis*. Ed. 3. Pars altera (Leipzig, 1964), p. 11.

[102] Bruno Snell, *Poetry and Society: The Role of Poetry in Ancient Greece* (Bloomington, 1961), pp. 68-69; cf. Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 2.

sed by «some local Aeginetan»:[103] «We shall yet be deemed to come forth in the light of day far stronger than our foes... But, whatsoever excellence [ἀρετὰν] Lord Destiny assigned me, well I know that the lapse of time will bring it to its appointed perfection» (37-38, 41-43). These appear to be, so far as I am able to determine, the only verses in Pindar's triumphal odes in which the word *aretá* unambiguously singifies aesthetic excellence in poetic composition, though the idea itself finds expression elsewhere in a multitude of ways.

It would be a misunderstanding of Pindar's meaning to assume that there is some fatalistic notion in the reference to Lord Destiny, as though destiny's gift of talent or genius forever absolved the fortunate recipient from any personal effort, aesthetic or ethical. «L'homme pourtant doit agir. Cette confiance intelligente qui fait qu'on entreprend ce qu'on sait pouvoir exécuter, cette énergie consciente d'elle-même s'appelle dans la langue de Pindare τόλμα, l'audace... C'est elle... qui anime le poète et qui lui permet de produire au jour les pensées qui s'agitent dans son cœur» (Croiset, pp. 231-232). Without *tólma* the *areté* of poetry would be sterile, an idea to which Pindar was keenly sensitive: «Would I could find me words as I move onwards as a bearer of good gifts in the Muses' car; would I might be attended by Daring [τόλμα] and by all-embracing Power!» (Ol., IX, 80-83; cf. Ol., XIII, 11-13). His confidence in his own poetic powers never wavered, but he knew that the shafts sped from his resonant bow would not find easy comprehension among the many (Ol., II, 83-86).[104]

Areté in the two senses of poetic and ethical excellence must, of course, be differentiated in thought and discourse. Each refers to a distinct conceptual reality, but they communicate in the notion of excellence that is common to both. A suggestion of this relationship was expressed by Bruno Snell, in a somewhat different context of ideas, when he wrote that «Pindar creates a kind of philosophy: all things in this life are so interwoven that they are dependent on one another, and in this condition a mutual 'need' or 'want'... exists between great virtue and wise poetry».[105]

This may explain why Pindar was impatient with the minor details of the contests celebrated in the triumphal odes — he wished to enter at once into «la région plus haute des idées générales et nobles: la force, la beauté, la gloire, la vertu, une descendance illustre, voilà ce qu'il aime à chanter». «Il voit toute chose d'une intuition prompte et synthétique, et en même temps profonde: car c'est l'âme, c'est la vertu agissante qu'il voit dans la beauté

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[103] Farnell, II, 267; cf. Puech, III, 48-49.

[104] Passages in which Pindar refers to his poetic creativity, or prays to the divinities of poetry to sustain his power, are too numerous to quote or to mention; typical ones will be found in Ol., III, 4-6; Isth., IV, 1; Paean VII (b), Sandys, p. 545.

[105] *Poetry and Society*, p. 61.

sensible; et sans rien ôter à cette beauté de son éclat et de sa perfection plastiques, il l'anime d'une vie supérieure» (Croiset, pp. 416, 421; cf. p. 152).

Thus Pindar writes, «'Tis meet for the good [ἐσλοῖσιν][106] to be hymned with fairest songs... For this is the only tribute that vergeth on the honours due to the immortals» (frag. 121, p. 581). Of the poet Euphanes Pindar says that he possessed a «gentle disposition towards the noble [ἑσλοῖς]» (Nem., IV, 95).[107] It is probably pure coincidence, but one cannot help being reminded of the passage in Ronsard's preface *Au Lecteur* (1550) in which he says that his odes were published «pour les gentils espris, ardans de la vertu» (I, 48).

Nowhere in Pindar are the concepts of ethical and aesthetic excellence more completely interpenetrated to an identity of essence than in the first Pythian ode. It makes luminously manifest, with an artistry inspired and governed by deepest moral conviction, that whatever distinction the needs of discourse must admit between the good and the beautiful is volatilized in the highest reaches of poetic creativity. In the prelude, the terror of Typhon, whom «Zeus hath not loved» (13), upon hearing the music of Apollo's golden lyre and the voice of the Muses, symbolizes far more than the interweaving of the things of this life in mutual dependence. For Pindar's thought, like that of Plato a century later, embraces every spiritual canton of the universe: «... in the opening lines of *Pythian* 1 he shapes a radiant vision of the task of music on earth, in heaven, and in hell.»[108] On earth the memory of the beneficence (ἀρετά) of Croesus does not fade (94), while the legendary monster who lives in Tartarus under Aetna, exhaling his rage in unapproachable volcanic fire, leaves a posterity of historical monsters like Phalaris, equally hated by Zeus, whom no lyre will ever welcome (95-98).

The distinction between the aesthetic and the ethical aspects of *vertu*, as well as the ultimate effacement of that distinction, are visible in many of Ronsard's poems. As early as 1553, *vertu* had meant for him «l'énergie créatrice de poésie», as Laumonier had seen (V, 131, n. 1). In *L'Hymne de... Charles Cardinal de Lorraine* (1559), Ronsard eulogizes the prelate for having reversed the calamitous situation of poetry in France during the early days of the reign of Henri II. The Cardinal had recognized the poetic merit of Michel de l'Hospital, of Dorat, Du Bellay, and Baïf, so that

> Soudain tu reveillas des François les courages
> A suivre la vertu, & alors nos boccages

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[106] Slater defines the substantive ἐσλός as *the noble*.

[107] The translation is Slater's, s.v. μαλακός; Sandys has «a gentle antagonist towards a noble adversary»; Farnell, «A man gently minded towards the good».

[108] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 40.

Reclus par si long temps, entre les buissons vers
Commencerent au vent à murmurer des vers.
(IX, 69)

In the *Complainte contre Fortune* of the same year Ronsard describes his struggle against «la tourbe ignorante» who refused to accept his poetic innovations:

Et plus elle crioit, plus elle estoit ardente
De déchirer mon nom, & plus me difamoit,
Et tant plus courageux, ma vertu s'allumoit
Contre ce populaire, imitant mille choses,
Dedans les livres Grecs divinement encloses.
Je fis des mots nouveaux, je restauray les vieux,
Bien peu me souciant du vulgaire envyeux...
(X, 21-22)

Henri Franchet, in his study of *Le Poète et son œuvre d'après Ronsard*, begins his summary of the contents of Chapter II, «La Vertu», with the bold affirmation: «La poésie est vertu» (p. 43), and almost at once (p. 44) asserts that the poet himself, in the *Responce aux injures* (1563), «confond la poésie avec la vertu elle-même:

Je me range à l'estude et apprens la *vertu*,[109]
Composant[110] et lisant suivant ma destinée,
Qui s'est dés mon enfance aux Muses enclinée...
[XI, 144]»

In the same *Responce* Ronsard gives his Huguenot adversaries a thorough lesson in the poetic art which he introduces thus:

Hà si tu eusses eu les yeux aussi ouvers
A derober mon art, qu'à derober mes vers,
Tu dirois que ma Muse est pleine d'artifice,
Et ma brusque vertu ne te seroit un vice.
(XI, 160)

Laumonier's note, emphasizing once more the aesthetic value of *vertu*, defines it as «ma fantaisie, les caprices de ma composition».[111]

But even as he says «La poésie est vertu», equating it, after Ronsard, with the art of composing verse, Franchet (p. 44) sees profound ethical

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[109] Franchet's emphasis here and below.

[110] Laumonier's text (XI, 144, v. 523) reads *Comparant*, corrected by R. Lebègue in XI, 189 (2e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*), to read *Composant*.

[111] See also the very significant prelude of Ronsard's *Hymne de l'Hyver*, XII, 68-69, vv. 1-26 (quoted and discussed above, Chap. XXI, sec. vii); XII, 188, vv. 325-332, where the *vertus* of the Medici family are extolled for having restored to honor the literature and the arts of ancient Greece; XIV, 142, vv. 177-194, esp. v. 190: «Pour la vertu j'ay quitté le vulgaire», where *vertu* means love of the art of poetry.

values in the poet's assessment of *vertu*: «Puisque la poésie se révèle à nous comme le son naturel d'une âme, le métal dont cette âme est formée nous intéresse tout d'abord. Pour que cette âme rende un son profond et noblement humain, il faut un métal pur, un alliage normal. Mais la norme de l'alliage humain, c'est la vertu. Voilà pourquoi Ronsard, après Platon et Ficin, fondait la doctrine de la *Fureur poétique* sur la *vertu*:

> Pourveu qu'il[112] soit preparé,
> Pur de vice, et reparé
> De la *vertu* precieuse.
> [III, 143]
>
> Car Dieu ne communique aux hommes ses mysteres
> S'ils ne sont *vertueux* devots et solitaires...
> [XII, 47]»[113]

The first of these quotations is from the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital* of 1550, but Ronsard had already thrice affirmed the ethical connotation of *vertu* in the Pindaric ode *Au Seigneur de Carnavalet* (1549) when he wrote:

> Le marbre, ou l'airain vétu
> D'un labeur vif par l'enclume,
> N'animent pas la vertu
> Comme je fai par ma plume...
> ... tu és fils legitime
> De la vertu qui t'estime
> T'ornant de ses dons divers,
> Pour ce-la ma douce corde
> Parlant ta gloire s'accorde
> Avecq' le son de mes vers.
>
> ANTISTROPHE [3]
>
> Lesquels en douceur parfaits
> Apparoistre se sont faits
> Sur le rivage du Loir,
> Consacrans à la memoire
> Les vertueus, qui leur gloire
> Ne mettent en nonchaloir.
> (I, 92, 97)

Though Ronsard could never, without betraying his profession and himself, have abandoned his commitment to the aesthetic concept of «énergie créatrice» as one of the supreme virtues of poetry, the sonnet sequence for Cassandre in which this commitment is stated (see above, n. 99), abounds in passages in which, «à l'exemple des troubadours et de Pétrarque, Ronsard parle de l'influence moralisante de l'amour...»[114]

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[112] The antecedent is «un cœur humain».

[113] Cf. Franchet, pp. 69-72, 77, 82; *Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 371-372.

[114] Laumonier's note, V, 131, n. 1.

A notable example is sonnet XLII:

Avant qu'Amour, du Chaos otieux
Ouvrist le sein, qui couvoit la lumiere,
Avec la terre, avec l'onde premiere,
Sans art, sans forme, estoyent brouillez les cieulx.

Ainsi mon tout erroit seditieux
Dans le giron de ma lourde matiere,
Sans art, sans forme, & sans figure entiere.
Alors qu'Amour le perça de ses yeulx.

Il arondit de mes affections
Les petitz corps en leurs perfections,
Il anima mes pensers de sa flamme.

Il me donna la vie, & le pouvoyr,
Et de son branle il fit d'ordre mouvoyr
Les pas suyviz du globe de mon ame.
(IV, 45)

The ethical influence of Eros is especially evident in the tercets, in spite of the rather awkward imagery borrowed from the atomic philosophers. But these verses did not attain their definitive form until the last of three revisions, which appeared in 1587. There the atomic imagery has vanished, the ethical intention is placed in an even clearer light, the thought is simpler, more direct, and nobler both in feeling and in movement. With the inspired substitution at the last moment of *m'emportant* for *m'agitant*,[115] the immanent universality of the sonnet unfolds its wings in flight:

Amour rendit ma nature parfaite,
Pure par luy mon essence s'est faite,
Il me donna la vie & le pouvoir,

Il eschaufa tout mon sang de sa flame,
Et m'emportant de son vol, fit mouvoir
Avecques luy mes pensers & mon ame.
(*S.*, I, 135-136)

The definitive version (1584) of the tercets of sonnet LXII (inc. *Les Elementz, & les Astres...*), celebrating the «influence moralisante» of a glance of Cassandre's eyes, continues and accentuates the same movement of transcendence:

Cet œil premier m'apprit que c'est d'aimer:
Il vint premier tout le cœur m'entamer,
Servant de but à ses fleches dardées.

[115] The reading in 1584.

L'esprit par luy desira la vertu
Pour s'en-voler par un trac non batu
Jusqu'au giron des plus belles Idées.[116]
(*LL.*, I, 36)

It is in the presence of Apollo and the Muses, and under the dominion of the ideas they personify, that the distinction between the ethical and aesthetic aspects of *vertu* appear irrelvant to Ronsard, and tends to be obliterated when his thought and sentiment rise to the highest planes of poetic experience.

Totally impertinent to our present theme would be any consideration of the many passages in Ronsard elicited by the bitter disillusionments of his permanent struggle for recognition and for material support of his poetic effort. He expressed his disappointment in poems like the *Complainte contre Fortune*, *La Promesse*, *Le Proces*, the two *Dialogues* with the Muses, and in countless verses of other poems; he was capable, in moments of great anguish and alienation from his art, of seeming to renounce the divinites who guided his existence:

Phœbus, tu ne vaux rien, & vous ne valez rien,
Muses, jouët à foux...
(X, 163)

None of this can stand for a moment against the judgment of Raymond Lebègue: «Il est... certain que Ronsard est, avant tout, un poète et que la poésie est la seule maîtresse à laquelle il soit resté fidèle...», or against Ronsard's own commitment in the earliest of his odes, *A son Luc*:

Tandis qu'en l'air je soufflerai ma vie,
Sonner Phebus j'aurai tousjours envie,
Et ses compaignes aussi,
Pour leur rendre un grand merci
De m'avoir fait Poëte de nature,
Idolatrant la musique, & peinture,
Prestre saint de leurs chansons
Qui accordent à tes sons.
(II, 157)

These verses probably date from 1541-1543. Toward the end of that decade Ronsard wrote a Pindaric ode for Joachim Du Bellay apostrophizing the Muse and praising the *vertus* of his colleague:

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[116] Cf. in *L.*, IV, sonnets LVI, LXXXVIII, CXLVI, CLXXIV, but esp. CXXXIX, and see Henri Weber's article, «Platonisme et sensualité dans la poésie amoureuse de la Pléiade», in *Lumières de la Pléiade*, pp. 163-164, 168-169, 175.

ANTISTROPHE [1]

Hai avant Muse, ores il faut
Le guinder par l'air aussi haut
Que ses vertus m'ont mis ici
Desous le joug d'un dous souci...
(I, 109)

What are these virtues? They are the qualities of a poet who has enlisted with Ronsard in the struggle for the renewal of French lyric along Hellenic, and especially Pindaric, lines (vv. 21-32). That triumphant struggle is destined to produce a poetry whose immortality the Muse assures:

ANTISTROPHE [2]

... ni les ans
Ni l'audace des vens nuisans,
Ni la dent des pluies qui mord,
Ne donne aus vers doctes la mort:
Par eus la Parque est devancée,
Ils ardent l'eternelle nuit,
Tousjours fleurissans par le fruit
Que la Muse ente en leur pensée...
(I, 112)

In the remainder of the second triad and in the third, Ronsard, faithful to the Pindaric concept of what a triumphal ode ought to contain, turns to the praise of the distinguished members of Du Bellay's family, but in the fourth strophe, with a sudden poetic movement characteristic of the Theban lyrist, he invokes the Muse once more as he returns to the *vertus* of Joachim himself:

Mais repren l'arc, Muse, il est tens
Guigner au blanc où tu pretens:
Puis que sa louange foisonne
En cent vertus propres à lui,
A quoi par les honneurs d'autrui
Rempli-je ce que je lui donne?
Sa gloire sufit pour borner
Les vers qui le veulent orner.
O bons dieus on ne sçauroit faire
Que la vertu se puisse taire
Bien qu'on brule de l'obscurcir...
(I, 116)

It is not difficult to imagine Ronsard's probable indifference, perhaps incomprehension, with respect to a question concerning the nature of the *vertu* for which Du Bellay is here eulogized. The word does not occur in Ronsard's *A sa Muse*, the proud *exegi monumentum* that he placed at the end of the fourth book of odes, nor is it to be found in any of the variants of this poem in the collective editions, but the concept of *vertu* is implicit in every verse. It would involve a *monnayage* of considerable insensitivity to seek

in that concept distinctions which must have been utterly foreign to the poet's thought:

> Sus donque Muse emporte au ciel la gloire
> Que j'ai gaignée annonçant la victoire
> Dont à bon droit je me voi jouissant,
> Et de ton fils consacre la memoire
> Serrant son front d'un laurier verdissant.
> (II, 153; cf. VII, 139-140; 308-309, vv. 25-32).

In the *Institution* written during the minority of Charles IX, when the politico-religious wars were about to engulf France for half a century, Ronsard tells the young prince that the virtue of a Christian king is a gift of the Muses in which beauty, intellect, justice, divinity, exist together in spiritual harmony:

> ... les princes Chrestiens n'estiment leur vertu
> Proceder ny de sang ni de glaive pointu:
> Ains par les beaux mestiers qui des Muses procedent,
> Et qui de gravité tous les autres excedent:
> Quand les Muses qui sont filles de Jupiter
> (Dont les Roys sont issus) les Roys daignent hanter,
> Elles les font marcher en toute reverence:
> Loing de leur magesté banissent l'ignorance,
> Et tous remplis de grace & de divinité,
> Les font parmy le peuple ordonner equité.
> (XI, 5)

Nowhere in the works of Ronsard is one likely to find a closer representation of that «gravité [qui] tous les autres excedent», akin to the *os profundum* of Pindar, than in the magnificent eulogy of the Muses that fills the exordium of the *Art poëtique*. Of the would-be poet Ronsard requires reverence for the Muses as the daughters of the Sky-god or of God, whose majesty they were the first to reveal, and a gentle, otherworldly spirit given to contemplation of the divine, «pour ce que les Muses ne veulent loger en une ame, si elle n'est bonne, saincte, & vertueuse...» (XIV, 5). The significance of such injunctions in Ronsard's most considered statement on the theory of poetry is self-evident, and so is the co-ordinate recommendation of the professional artisan: «Tu seras laborieux à corriger & limer tes vers, & ne leur pardonneras non plus qu'un bon jardinier à son ante, quand il la voit chargée de branches inutiles ou de bien peu de prouffict» (XIV, 6-7).

Ronsard's deepest instincts as a thoughtful artist moved naturally on the theoretical as well as on the poetic level toward the discovery of the identity of essence of the ethical and the aesthetic. But these instincts were in permanent conflict with the realities of a precarious dependence on the Court, realities that had brought from him the cry, «Phœbus, tu ne vaux rien», and this affront to the divinities whom he, as a poet, revered above all others, «Muses, jouët à foux...»

The contention in Ronsard's mind rose to its extremest pitch with the accession of Henri III. It seemed to him, after his affectionate relationship with Charles IX. as though his life had been exhausted of meaning by that event. Some ten years after he had uttered these words of sacrilege against Apollo and his divine choir, he turned, in the *Dialogue entre les Muses deslogées & Ronsard*, upon the creative principle that was their gift to poets, that had enriched the life of the spirit for him and numberless others:

Vertu, tu m'as trompé, te pensant quelque chose!
Je cognois maintenant que le malheur dispose
De toy qui n'es que vent, puisque tu n'as pouvoir
De conserver les tiens qui errent sans avoir
Ny faveurs, ny amis, vagabonds d'heure en heure
Sans feu, sans lieu, sans bien, sans place ny demeure.
(XVIII, 193)

«Les tiens qui errent... Sans feu, sans lieu» are the company of the Muses, and, in *filigrane*, their adherents, their prophets, fallen upon days of national neglect with the advent of Henri III. In a vision Ronsard imagines that he has met a band of celestial divinities, victims of human fecklessness, wandering disconsolately upon the highways of the earth:

Elle estoit mal en conche[117] & pauvrement vestue:
Son habit attaché d'une espine poinctue
Luy pendoit à l'espaule, & son poil dédaigné
Erroit salle & poudreux, crasseux & mal peigné.
Toutefois de visage elle estoit assez belle:
Sa contenance estoit d'une jeune pucelle,
Une honte agreable estoit dessus son front,
Et son œil esclairoit comme les Astres font:
Quelque part qu'en marchant elle tournast la face,
La vertu la suyvoit, l'eloquence & la grace,
Monstrant en cent façons dés son premier regard,
Que sa race venoit d'une royale part,[118]
Si bien qu'en la voyant, toute ame genereuse
Se rechaufant d'amour en estoit amoureuse.
(XVIII, 90)

Deeply touched, Ronsard wishes to know their name, their country, and city. To these questions the Muses give brief answers:

Si tu as jamais veu
Ce Dieu, qui de son char tout rayonné de feu
Brise l'air en grondant, tu as veu nostre pere:
Grece est nostre pays, Memoire est nostre mere.
(XVIII, 91)

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[117] Mal vêtu. Huguet, s.v. *conche*. Cf. XV, 28, v. 285.

[118] «Enfantement.» Huguet, s.v. *Part* 2; «royale» because the Muses are the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne.

They give a rather fuller reply, in every aspect of which the Pindaric spirit is sensible, to a question that the poet's uneasy conscience had avoided asking: Their vocation, they say, is to honor great kings, to encourage veneration for the people and the laws, to make virtue an object of the world's love (69), to draw the sting of death by an immortality of renown that poetry can give, to kindle the mind of man with a divine flame (vv. 67-70).

From the meaning of *vertu* (vv. 42, 69, 105) in the light of each of its contexts, it is manifest that even as he was being driven by personal despair to make the gesture, which he knew to be vain, of renouncing his mission (vv. 137-150), Ronsard remained deeply penetrated by the conviction, the stronger for being tacit, that the ethical and aesthetic aspects of poetry coexisted in indissoluble fusion, *sub specie divinitatis*.

CHAPTER XXIV

ETHICS IN PINDAR AND RONSARD: TERRESTRIAL BONDS, CELESTIAL AFFINITIES (IV)

«Words without thoughts never to heaven go»*

I. «Non satis est pulchra esse poemata»

This statement (*A.P.*, 99) may be enough to condemn Horace as hopelessly backward in the eyes of those for whom beauty of style is its own justification. The fact that these words occur in a passage[1] which demands of a poet, in addition to stylistic beauty, the power to affect the emotions of the auditor, with all the ethical implications that that involves, would perhaps not suffice to vindicate the Roman lyrist in the judgment of critics whose aesthetic heaven knows no limiting horizons.

Ronsard was not so tolerant. In his third preface to the *Franciade*, which is a theory of epic poetry, he says to the «lecteur apprentif», «Tu seras industrieux à esmouvoir les passions & affections de l'ame, car c'est la meilleure partie de ton mestier, par des carmes qui t'esmouveront le premier, soit à rire ou à pleurer, afin que les lecteurs en facent autant apres toy» (XVI, 344-345). Not a word here, by the author of some of the most beautiful and most deeply moving lyrics and elegies in the French language, about the imperative necessity for beauty of style and form. He obviously takes these for granted as indispensable and as subserving «la meilleure partie de ton mestier». Ronsard knew where he wished the primary emphasis to fall, and it was not on the beauty of word, style, and form for their own sake. In this his fundamental instinct was identical with that of the poet of Thebes: «Pindars Dichtung... ist alles andere als ein Schöne-Worte-Machen.»[2] No doubt Ronsard often forsook his genuine poetic impulse to write something pretty and relatively meaningless, but in the serious practice of his craft he anticipated Fénelon's observation in the *Lettre à l'Académie*, «Tout ornement qui n'est qu'ornement est de trop».[3]

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* Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, III, iii, 98.

[1] *Ars Poetica*, 99-100.

[2] Manfred Bernard, *Pindars Denken in Bildern: Von Wesen der Metapher* (Pfullingen, 1963), p. 60. Cf. Wilamowitz *et al.*, *Die griech. und lat. Literatur und Sprache*, p. 52.

[3] Epigraph of *Les Métaphores de Platon* by Pierre Louis.

Pindar had understood what his Roman emulator was to see some centuries after him, but his vision was a deeper one. «Pindar saw that mere beauty was not enough, and that he must always ally it to truth, but when the two worked together in unity he knew that he was faithful to his own exacting ideal of wisdom.»[4]

But wisdom alone, no matter how closely it approximated some abstract ideal, was inadequate for one whose creative life was devoted to poetry rather than philosophy. Certain observations of Marrou (p. 327) concerning philosophers and orators in the Hellenistic period reflect an attitude prevalent in the time of Pindar among poets and philosophers: «... les philosophes n'ont jamais admis que la Vérité pût se passer des Muses... L'homme grec veut être à la fois l'artiste et le sage, le lettré à la finesse souriante ou fleurie et le penseur qui connaît le secret du monde ou de l'homme...» When Pindar prays to Alatheia, the Goddess of Truth, to preserve him from uttering a falsehood (frag. 205, p. 609), we may be sure that the Muse is not far off — in the tenth Olympian (3) they are, in fact, invoked together. With the aid of the Graces, goddesses of charm and beauty, who are for Pindar the queens of song.

> «... all sweet things are brought to bloom for mortals,
> Whatever gifts a man hath, wisdom [σοφός] or beauty
> or radiant life»
>
> (Ol., XIV, 3, 5-7; trans. Farnell)

II. Σοφός and σοφία

The word σοφός has been variously translated. To Henri Estienne's «sapientia»[5] and Farnell's «wisdom» Sandys preferred «skilled in song», which he may have found in Gildersleeve (p. 238); Bowra has «wise» (*Pindar*, p. 30); Myers, «wisdom» (p. 49); Lattimore, «wise» (p. 42); Puech, «le talent» (I, p. 158). If these translations may be taken as representative of the meanings that Pindar assigned to the word, it is clear that for him it signified either poetic skill or wisdom. In his *Lexicon to Pindar* Slater defines σοφός as «*wise, skilled* of people... specifically *skilled in poetry*», and σοφία as «*art, wisdom* esp. *poetic art, skill*». Guthrie finds the same general meanings from Homer onwards.[6]

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[4] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 31.

[5] Second (1566) edition of the odes, p. 155; third edition (1586), p. 107.

[6] A *Hist. of Greek Philosophy*, III, 27-28; cf. J.A. Davison, «Pindar's Conception of Poetry», *Proc. of the Class. Assn.*, 33 (1936), p. 39; Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 5.

In Paean VII Pindar prays to «Mnemosyne... and to her daughters, to grant me a ready [poetic] resource; for the minds of men are blind, whosoever, without the maids of Helicon, seeketh the steep path of them that walked it by their wisdom [σοφίαις]» (Sandys, p. 545). The translation by Puech (omitting the invocation) does not differ in its essentials from the above version of Sandys: «Car les esprits des hommes sont aveugles, quand ils veulent, sans le concours des vierges d'Hélicon, venir explorer la route profonde de la sagesse [σοφίαις].»

Jacqueline Duchemin (p. 28) follows exactly the translation of Puech, with a single exception: for «sagesse» she substitutes «connaissance», and adds in a note, «Nous préférons de beaucoup 'connaissance' à 'sagesse' pour rendre σοφία». This preference is justified by the nature of the Muses themselves as divinities of many departments of knowledge and by the traditional understanding of their function. «Throughout antiquity the prevailing conception of [the] Muses follows Hesiod (*Th.*, 25 ff.). [The] Muses approach the poet on Helicon and give him sceptre, voice, and knowledge.» But this does not represent the totality of their attributes. «Poets, scientists, and philosophers from Homer (*Od.*, 8.488) to Ausonius (Auson., 20) and from Heraclitus to Proclus celebrate the M[uses] as bringing to humanity the purifying power of music, the inspiration of poetry and divine wisdom.»[7] Pindar himself refers to songs as «the sage [σοφαὶ] daughters of the Muses» (Nem., IV, 2-3).

Of this, it is needless to say, Jacqueline Duchemin is perfectly aware; indeed, she devotes many pages of the first chapter of her book, «La chaîne aimantée de l'inspiration: Les Muses», to a study of the relationship between «Pindare [qui] fait très précisément office de héraut des dieux» (p. 33), the choir of the Muses, and their choragus Apollo. During the course of this inquiry she says: «Nous voici, en apparence au moins, assez loin de la simple notion de connaissance. C'est qu'aux yeux de Pindare le savoir du poète n'est pas un banal savoir. Il vient des dieux, de Zeus, sans doute... Mais il vient bien plutôt d'Apollon, qui, sauf dans les *Olympiques* peut-être, éclipse même Zeus de son éclat, et semble de beaucoup le dieu le plus proche du cœur du poète» (p. 40).

Here, in fact, appearance and reality are virtually indistinguishable. If Apollo is closer by far to the heart of Pindar, it is because he is not only the god of the lyre, but because «As the god of Delphi he is the god of wisdom...,[8] the Word of Zeus.[9] His lyre is intimately, inseparably associated,

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[7] G.M.A. Hanfmann, «Muses», *OCD*, p. 583, col. 2.

[8] Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 60.

[9] See *RGTP*, pp. 414-415.

as its instrument, with the expression of that wisdom. It was thus almost inevitable that Pindar should find in the word σοφία the full substance of everything that poetry meant to him — its technical, musical, and verbal aspects, and, in the first place, the voice of Delphic and Hellenic wisdom that enjoined self-knowledge and moderation upon all possessed of understanding. «His work may have its professional side, but it is none the less a vocation, and it is quite as much a service to gods as to men... The poet... is... a wise man of a rare kind, and Pindar's assessment of his own position can be seen from what he says of himself in a Dithyramb to his own people of Thebes...:

> To be her chosen
> Messenger of wise [σοφῶν] words
> To the fine dancing-places of Hellas
> The Muse has raised me up.»[10]

As Manfred Bernard has said: «Pindar hat selbst für seine Auffassung der Dichtkunst den Ausdruck der Sophia gefunden. Denn um die Bedeutsamkeit der Dinge weiss der Dichter nur kraft seiner angeborenen oder von den Musen vermittelten Weisheit, kraft seiner Sophia; und diese Dinge im Lied hinzustellen, sie fassbar und bildhaft zu gestalten, vermag er ebenfalls nur dank seiner Sophia, dank seinem technischen Können. Beides vereint sich ihm in der Idee der Sophia.»[11]

III. Art and Wisdom in Pindar's Odes

This fusion within the word σοφία, as Pindar felt and understood it, of the notions of wisdom and the artistic means of expressing it, is not an easily accessible concept. Werner Jaeger has devoted a thoughtful page to its analysis. «The poet's art», he says (*Paideia*, I, 219), «is essentially, 'wisdom'. Pindar constantly uses the word σοφία to denote poetic genius. It is impossible to find a satisfactory translation for it; each of us would translate it according to his own view of the true nature and effect of the Pindaric spirit, and there is a vast difference between the various possible views. If it is simply understanding of the craft of making good poems, then the word must be translated by an aesthetic term.[12] Homer spoke of the carpenter's σοφία, and even in the

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[10] Bowra, *Pindar*, pp. 5-6.

[11] *Pindars Denken in Bildern*, p. 62.

[12] Cf. Gildersleeve, p. xxxvi: Pindar «is a leader in the skill of poesy, which to him is by eminence wisdom (σοφία), wisdom in the art of the theme, and in the art of the treatment». See also p. xlii: «... his call across the centuries is to the lovers of art as art.» — Note, however, that the fourth section of Gildersleeve's «Introductory Essay» of his edition of the *Olympian and Pythian Odes* (pp. xxvii-xxxiv) is devoted to Pindar's thought on such subjects as God,

fifth [Pindar's] century the word could still refer entirely to technical skill. But we cannot help feeling that there is greater weight in the word as Pindar uses it. By his time it had long been used of the possessor of higher knowledge, exceptional understanding, insight into subjects far above the comprehension, though not the respect, of the common herd. For instance, Xenophanes used it of his poetic understanding. In his poems, he proudly calls his revolutionary criticism of the current conceptions of the universe 'my wisdom'. And it is at once aparent that the expression and the thought cannot be separated: both together, as a unity, form his σοφία. The same must surely be true of Pindar's deeply meditative art. The 'prophet of the Muses' speaks 'the truth'. He 'draws it from the deep of his heart'. He pronounces judgment on the true worth of man.»[13]

Croiset, drawing upon many passages in the odes and fragments, has given us (pp. 238-239) a portrait of the wise man, the man of true worth, as Pindar may have imagined him: A model of self-control, he is not given to idle speech. For him not every truth is worth uttering, silence is sometimes the wiser course. Knowing the inevitability of destiny, he accepts uncomplainingly the divine will with pious resignation. He endures sufferings patiently, but once they have ceased he erases them from memory. He enjoys with pleasure the good of the present moment. Free of illusions, of vain desires, of sterile regrets, he approaches old age in a serene spirit, without faint-hearted apprehensions and with the gentle disposition of a well-balanced soul.

In what follows there is no idle effort to improve on Croiset's portrait, but rather an attempt to discover some of the representative passages in which Pindar uses the word σοφία strictly in the sense of *wisdom*, with no suggestion of its other frequent meaning of *poetic skill* or *talent*.

At the end of the third Olympian, for example, he states that Theron has attained by his prowess the pillars of Heracles, the utmost limits of human achievement. «All beyond that bourne cannot be approached either by the wise [σοφοῖς] or by the unwise [ἀσόφοις]. I shall not pursue it; else may I be deemed a fool» (44-45). — The poet praises Hieron for his possession of two great blessings: «... wealth, with wisdom [σοφίας] allotted thereto, is the best gift of Fortune...» (Pyth., II, 56). — In a fragment of a dithyramb: «Why dost thou deem that to be wisdom [σοφίαν], in which one man in small

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mythology, the brevity and sorrows of human life, government, Greek ethics, the immortality of the soul, etc. It is no infidelity to Gildersleeve to suppose that Pindar's call across the centuries did not exclude lovers of art as people of thought and sentiment.

[13] Cf. Bruno Snell, *Poetry and Society*, p. 64.

measure excelleth another? For man is not able with his human mind to search out the counsels of the gods, but he was born of a mortal mother» (frag. 61, p. 553). — In a fragment of a dirge he says of souls destined to pass to the Islands of the Blest: «... from these come into being august monarchs, and men who are swift in strength and supreme in wisdom [σοφίᾳ]; and, for all future time, men call them sainted heroes» (frag. 133, p. 593).

The process by which the fusion of the concept of wisdom with its aesthetic expression takes place may be observed in one of the most frequently cited passages in the odes of Pindar, but its full significance in relation to our present theme will perhaps be best understood in the light of a brief analysis of the second Olympian — the circumstances in which it was composed, and the poet's intention in writing it.

The ode was addressed to Theron, tyrant of the powerful and splendid city of Acragas, in celebration of his victory in the chariot-race, 476 B.C. Theron was old and had but a few years to live. It was not surprising that «Pindare ait tenté de répondre aux préoccupations les plus intimes, les plus profondes du maître de cette puissante cité» (Méautis, p. 67).[14] What these profound concerns may have been can be inferred from Theron's actions as tyrant and Pindar's words of consolation in the second Olympian.

«Theron... made himself master of Akragas by a trick, which he is said to have redeemed by a just, mild, and beneficent reign» (Gildersleeve, p. 140).[15] His son Thrasydaeus, however, ruler of Himera, so oppressed the inhabitants of that city that they rebelled and sought the aid of Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse. Possibly through the friendly intervention of the poet Simonides, who was said to be on good terms with both Theron and Hieron, a war between them was averted. «The rebellious spirits in Himera were quelled, and our just, mild, and beneficent prince, who was elevated to the rank of a hero after his death, so thinned the ranks of the citizens by executions that it was necessary to fill them up by foreigners» (Gildersleeve, p. 141).[16]

«Ame religieuse certainement, scrupuleuse peut-être, le chef de la puissante cité dut reconnaître qu'il avait accompli certains actes qui éveillaient en lui des remords... Oui, lui dit Pindare [15-18], nos actes du passé subsistent, justes ou injustes, rien ne peut faire qu'ils n'aient pas été accomplis; le Temps lui-même est incapable de faire que ce qui a eu lieu n'ait pas eu lieu,

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[14] In the following paragraphs I am much indebted to the general lines of G. Méautis' interpretation of the second Olympian ode in his *Pindare le Dorien*, pp. 67-79.

[15] Theron's rule is described in almost the same terms by J.B. Bury, *A History of Greece*, I, 324-325.

[16] Cf. Bury, *op. cit.*, I, 331.

mais l'oubli peut étendre son voile, éteindre le souvenir des malheurs d'autrefois...» (Méautis, p. 71).

In writing the second Olympian Pindar did not close his eyes to the cruelties for which the aging tyrant may have felt the bite of conscience, but he chose rather to remember the beneficent aspects of Theron's reign which had secured for him the affections of the citizens of Acragas. Strong hints of the elevation of the monarch to heroic rank are prominent in Pindar's ode. The radiant description of the Islands of the Blest carries the consoling promise for Theron of a blissful hereafter, in which «the good, having the sun shining for evermore... receive the boon of a life of lightened toil... in the presence of the honoured gods» (61-63, 65-66). They will «pass by the highway of Zeus unto the tower of Cronus» (70), and dwell in the company of the legendary heroes of Greece — Peleus, Cadmus, Achilles (78-79).[17]

The ode approaches its conclusion and Pindar abruptly interrupts its course with a poetic movement distinctive of his style: «Many a swift arrow have I beneath mine arm, within my quiver, many an arrow that is vocal to the wise [φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν];[18] but for the crowd they need interpreters. The true poet [σοφὸς][19] is he who knoweth much by gift of nature, but they that have only learnt the lore of song... chatter in vain against the god-like bird of Zeus» (Ol., II, 83-88).

The god-like bird, the eagle among poets, is Pindar, prophet of Apollo and the Muses, surrogate bearer of the Word of Zeus, and by that token «no simple purveyor of words» (Finley, p. 65). His swift poetic shafts are resonant with meaning for men of understanding (φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν),[20] because his word-arrows are weighted with deep significance. Pindar is himself σοφός, accomplished beyond all rivals in the art of poetry. But he is more truly a poet than mere artistry or technical superiority might suggest. The depth of his wisdom is that of an Apolline spokesman of Zeus. It is accessible only to those who, like Theron, by a gift of nature analogous to that of the poet, are

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[17] Méautis (pp. 75-77) states that in this description of the life after death «il y a... un écho des théories orphiques» known to Theron, and that the poet's allusions to the destiny of souls are a «voile levé sur les Mystères orphiques, révélés aux seuls initiés». This perhaps explains the esoteric quality of Pindar's reference to «many an arrow that is vocal to the wise» (Ol., II, 83-85, quoted below). Cf. Wilamowitz, p. 243.

[18] Slater, «συνετός] *understanding*, pro subs.».

[19] The translators and commentators differ in their evaluation of the word in this context. Gildersleeve (pp. xlii, 158) takes it as a reference to «the poetic art». Myers (p. 10) agrees; Puech (I, 47), and Duchemin (p. 36), find neutral ground with «habile»; H. Estienne has «sapiens» (2nd ed., p. 41; 3rd ed., p. 29); Farnell (I, 13) gives «wise», as do Lattimore (p. 8), Guthrie, *A Hist. of Gr. Philosophy*, III, 28, and Méautis (p. 69), who has «sage».

[20] See Sandys' comment, p. 281, n. 1, on Pindar's expression ἀχοὰ σοφοῖς, in Pyth., IX, 78.

able to embrace profound thought and sentiment inwrought in expressive form. «Theron versteht seine tiefen Worte, die für die Menge der Erläuterung bedürfen. Und obgleich er sicherlich die Lehren über das Leben nach dem Tode selbst erst eben kennen gelernt hat, wirft er sich doch in die Brust als der, welchem die Dichterkraft, die auch das ungeahnte kündet, eingeboren ist, gegenüber mühsam angelerntem Wissen» (Wilamowitz, p. 247).

IV. Ronsard and the Second Olympian Ode: σοφός, *sage*, *docte*

In his Pindaric odes Ronsard on many occasions employed themes suggested by the second Olympian, but of the various passages he adapted from it, the one we have just studied seems to have made the greatest impression on him.

He made use of it in the ode *A Madame Marguerite* when he proposed to praise her

> autrement
> Que nos poëtes barbares,[21]
> Qui ses saintes vertus rares
> Ont souillé [!] premierement.

He claims superiority to this rabble of versifiers, for

> J'ai sous l'esselle un carquois
> Gros de fleches nompareilles,
> Qui ne font bruire leurs vois
> Que pour les *doctes oreilles*:
> Leur roideur n'est apparante
> A telle bande ignorante,
> Quand l'une d'elles annonce
> L'honneur que mon arc enfonce...[22]
> (I, 72-73)

The Pindaric ode *A Jouachim du Bellai*, in which Ronsard refers to his colleague as to a gifted ally in the poetic revolution they were carrying out against the *versificateurs*, is even more heavily indebted to the second Olympian:

> Celui qui est *endoctriné*
> Par le seul naturel bien né
> Se haste de ravir le pris:
> Mais ces rimeurs qui ont apris
> Avec travail, peines, & ruses,
> Tousjours ils enfantent des vers

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[21] A gentle allusion to the Rhétoriqueurs and the Marotiques.

[22] My emphasis here and below. The textual parallels between this passage and the second Olympian were analyzed in *POR*, pp. 39-40.

Tortus, & courans de travers
Parmi la carriere des Muses:
Eus égualés à nos chants beaus,
Ils sont semblables aus corbeaus
Lesquels desous l'ombre quaquetent
Contre deus aigles, qui aguetent
(Portans la foudre du grand Roi)
Le tens de ruer leurs tempestes
Desus les miserables testes
De ces criards palles d'éfroi...[23]
(I, 111-112)

In these odes Ronsard's intention was to use Pindar's verses as a weapon in his literary warfare against the Court poets led by Saint-Gelais. It would therefore be irrelevant to ask whether he had understood what had prompted Pindar to address words of comfort and hope to Theron. One may presume that his readiness to dismember and distribute Pindar's closely woven lines between two of his odes is an indication that he lacked a genuine understanding of Pindar's meaning. But that conclusion, though fairly probable, does not necessarily follow — Ronsard was in search of themes for a definite polemical purpose, essentially different from Pindar's and, when found, he inserted them wherever he thought that purpose would best be served. He neglected the more esoteric aspects of Pindar's words to Theron (see above, n. 17), but he surely did not overlook the Theban poet's observation on the innate qualities which differentiated the σοφός from the poetasters. That distinction was the essence of his attack on the «rimeurs», as he called them, of the preceding generation.

How did Ronsard understand the words σοφός and σοφία as employed by Pindar in the second Olympian? Did he take σοφός to mean *wise* or *skilled in poetry*? Did he take σοφία to mean *wisdom* or *poetic art*?

One may assume without much risk that the semantic values of σοφός and σοφία would hardly be exactly duplicated in *sage* and *sagesse*. The meanings of these two sets of words necessarily followed two completely independent histories. Had Ronsard anticipated Henri Estienne's understanding of the relevant passage he would have translated σοφός by *sage*, the French etymological equivalent of Estienne's *sapiens*. That would effectively have excluded the concept *skilled in poetry*, a concept which is not found in Huguet, Nicot, Cotgrave, or Littré, s. vv. *sage*, *sagesse*. It is equally absent from the overwhelming majority of the numerous passages in Ronsard in which these words occur.[24]

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[23] For the textual parallels with the second Olympian see *POR*, pp. 52, 60.

[24] Possible exceptions are I, 129, vv. 12-13; II, 81, vv. 25-27; XII, 174, vv. 37-38.

Two thoughts must have been insistently present in Ronsard's mind as he wrote the Pindaric odes, so bizarre to most of his contemporaries, for Madame Marguerite and Joachim du Bellay. At the outset of his revolutionary career in poetry, when everything that he most desired was at stake, he had to convince a frequently recalcitrant public, especially including King and Court, of his superior skill. The poet who sought to oust an entrenched coterie of rivals, who was eventually to develop the notion of the *poète rusé*,[25] could not have excluded this consideration. But the premises of his entire poetic effort were rooted in humanism, particularly Hellenic humanism. He was presenting himself as a poet whose art was grounded in learning, sometimes of the most difficult kind, acquired at the feet of one of the great French humanists, Jean Dorat. To convey adequately in French the thoughts contained in Pindar's σοφός, σοφία, and συνετός, Ronsard needed a word that would combine the notions of poetic skill, wisdom, learning, and understanding. He found it in *docte*.

Huguet is not very helpful in this connection. He gives no example, s.v. *docte*, that suggests a possible relationship to poetry. Nicot and Ch. Marty-Laveaux[26] are virtually silent. Cotgrave, however, defines *docte* as *learned, skillfull, cunning, thoroughly instructed*. To some extent he anticipates Littré: «1° Instruit, versé en toute sorte de connaissances littéraires... 2° On donne quelquefois l'épithète de doctes aux Muses; de là doctes veilles peut prendre le sens d'œuvre poétique.» In his poems Ronsard never wrote «doctes veilles», though he knew such vigils well; on the other hand, expressions like «doctes Muses», «doctes sœurs», «doctes mestiers De Calliope», «Le docte chœur des filles de Memoire», occur regularly in every period of his life.[27]

Where Pindar states that his words are «vocal to the wise» Ronsard, in the ode to Madame Marguerite, who had understood and supported his literary innovations at the Court of her brother Henri II, writes of his «fleches nompareilles, Qui ne font bruire leurs vois Que pour les *doctes oreilles*...» Here the connotations of *wisdom* and *understanding* enter into the meaning of *doctes*, for in the mythical portion of the ode beginning with the second strophe Ronsard says:

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[25] See *RGTP*, pp. 191-196 and my article, «Ronsard poète rusé», *CAIEF*, No. 22 (1970), pp. 41-52.

[26] *Langue de la Pléiade*, I, 123.

[27] III, 166, v. 41 (var. of 1560-1587); V, 264, v. 84; IX, 172, vv. 345-346; XVIII, 324, v. 194. — Without using the word *docte* Ronsard virtually defines it in his discourse *Des Vertus intellectuelles et moralles*, XVIII, 453, lines 21-23, which reflect the influence of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1140 b 31-1141 a 8.

Par un miracle nouveau
Pallas du bout de sa lance
Ouvrit un peu le cerveau
De François seigneur de France.
Adonques Vierge nouvelle
Tu sortis de sa cervelle,
Et les Muses qui te prindrent
En leurs sçiences t'apprindrent:
Mais quand le tens eut parfait
L'acroissance de ton age,
Tu pensas en ton courage,
De mettre à chef un grand fait.
(I, 74-75)

The great deed that Marguerite, the new Pallas, goddess of wisdom and reason, was born to accomplish, was the destruction of «Le vilain monstre Ignorance» (v. 54),[28] which sought to arrest the advance of French humanism. One of Laumonier's notes on this second strophe (I, 74, n. 3) is very instructive: «L'assimilation de la princesse Marguerite et de Pallas, s'imposait: 'Elle estoit, dit Brantôme, si sage, si vertueuse, si parfaite en sçavoir & sapience, qu'on lui donna le nom de la Minerve ou Pallas de la France.' Elle portait dans ses armes, ajoute-t-il, un rameau d'olivier, emblème de Pallas, avec cette devise: *Rerum sapientia custos* (éd. Lalanne, VIII, 128). C'est elle qui, avec son chancelier Michel de l'Hospital, prit sous son égide Ronsard dans sa querelle avec Mellin de Saint-Gelais.»

Where Pindar says that his word-arrows need interpreters for the multitude and that the true poet is born, not made, Ronsard, in the ode to Du Bellay, whose collaboration in their common Pindaric effort he acknowledged, writes that only he who is «*endoctriné* Par le seul naturel bien né», can hope to achieve anything of merit in poetry. Du Bellay and he will hurl the thunderbolts of Jupiter-Henri II upon the heads of their rivals, the chattering ravens,

... ces criards palles d'éfroi
ANTISTROPHE [2]
Voians l'aigle: mais ni les ans,
Ni l'audace des vens nuisans,
Ni la dent des pluies qui mord,
Ne donne aus *vers doctes* la mort:
Par eus la Parque est devancée,
Ils ardent l'eternelle nuit,
Tousjours fleurissans par le fruit
Que la Muse ente en leur pensée,
Le tens qui survient de bien loin
En est le fidele témoin.
(I, 112)

[28] «Ce monstre personnifie l'esprit rétrograde du Moyen Age représenté par les suppôts de la Scolastique, hostiles à la Renaissance des Lettres, des Sciences et de la Philosophie.» Note by Laumonier, I, 75, n. 2.

These passages demonstrate that Ronsard claimed for his colleague and himself both technical and intellectual superiority over their predecessors. The reference to Pallas in the first of these odes and to the Muse in vv. 67-68 of the second, are certain indications that for Ronsard the word *docte* conveyed not only the connotation of poetic skill, but also that of wisdom.

That word, it is true, has its semantic being rooted so often simultaneously in both of these concepts that one is sometimes uncertain which of the two is dominant. When Ronsard revises a verse (VIII, 348): «Et que servent les vers tant soient ilz bien escritz» to read «... tant *doctes* soyent escris», or when he refers (VIII, 21) to the «docte cizeau» that will sculpt the tomb of François I[er], we can probably conclude that he intends by the use of the word *docte* to emphasize the notion of skill in poetry or the plastic arts. One is less certain that that is the case when the adjective is applied to individuals: «le docte [J.A. de] Baïf», «Docte Buttet», «Peletier le docte», «Les doctes Romains».[29]

The *Hymne de la Mort* begins with a lament that everything worth saying has already been said by the poets of antiquity,

> Lesquelz jadis guidez de leur mere Vertu,
> Ont tellement des pieds ce grant chemin batu,
> Qu'on ne voit au-jourdhuy sur la docte poussiere
> D'Helicon, que les pas d'Hesiode & d'Homere
> Imprimez vivement, & de mille autres Grecz
> Des vieux siecles passez...
>
> (VIII, 163)

With the reverent expression «docte poussiere D'Helicon», even considered in isolation from the context, it seems clear that the technical skills of Hesiod, Homer, and the Greek poets generally, are not in the forefront of Ronsard's thought. This is equally true of the foremost Roman poets, whose *artifice* he considers as subordinate to their *doctrine*: «... les poëtes Romains», he says in the *Art poëtique*, «ont foisonné en telle fourmiliere, qu'ilz ont apporté aux libraires plus de charge que d'honneur, excepté cinq ou six desquelz la doctrine, accompagnée d'un parfaict artifice, m'a tousjours tiré en admiration» (XIV, 5).

Nor was he writing about the technical proficiency of the poet when in an ode to René d'Urvoi he described the celestial orientation communicated to poetry by the Muses:

> Les plumes doctes & rares
> Jusque au ciel ont envoié
> Araché des eaus avares
> Achille presque noié.

[29] IX, 69; X, 205, 163; VI, 29, v. 31 (var. of 1560).

C'est la Muse qui engarde
Les bons de ne mourir pas,
Et qui nos talons retarde
Pour ne devaler là bas.

La Muse l'enfer defie,
Seule nous éleve aus cieus
Seule nous beatifie
Ennombré aus rengs des Dieus.
(II, 151)

The humanists' war against Ignorance in which Michel de l'Hospital had enlisted with Princess Marguerite in defence of the Muses and their disciplines is the essential theme of the Pindaric ode to the Chancellor. «Sa véritable nouveauté, sa particulière importance viennent... des idées que Ronsard y exprime. Glorifier les Muses dans un récit épique pouvait être un sujet banal: il prend une vie singulière, une valeur d'actualité, si l'on observe que cette glorification des Muses, ramenées des cieux sur la terre par un chancelier humaniste, n'est, sous la forme d'un symbole, que la vibrante apologie, par son principal ouvrier, de cette poésie nouvelle où s'affirme et s'incarne l'Humanisme de la Renaissance» (*Hist. de la Pl.*, I, 368).[30] In the fifteenth triad Jupiter encourages his daughters to overcome an initial reverse and to persevere in their effort to vanquish Ignorance, the enemy of learning and wisdom. The task assigned to them is intrinsically noble, for as Jupiter tells them,

STROPHE 15
Ceulx là que je feindray Poëtes
Par la grace de ma bonté,
Seront nommez les Interpretes
Des Dieux, & de leur volunté...
(III, 145-146)

and they are promised a noble guide whose learning will assist them to their ultimate triumph over their antagonist:

ANTISTROPHE [15]
Allez mes Filles, il est heure
De fendre les champs écumeux,
Allez ma gloire la meilleure,
Allez mon loz le plus fameux.
Vous ne debvez dessus la terre
Long temps ceste fois sejourner,
Que l'Ignorance avec sa guerre
Ne vous contraigne retourner:[31]

[30] «Le lyrisme de la Pléiade se nourrit de la 'substantifique moelle' des Anciens...» Pierre Jourda, *Actes du Congrès de Lyon*, 8-13 Septembre 1958, (1960), p. 405.

[31] «Sous-entendre: au ciel.» Note by Laumonier.

Pour retomber soubz la conduitte
D'un guide, dont la docte main
Par un effroy Grec, & Romain,
Aislera ses piedz à la fuitte.[32]
(III, 146)

With this promise Jupiter breathes divine inspiration into the Muses and sends them as his messengers to earth where they are welcomed by a poet who longs for the inspiration and celestial wisdom that they have the power to impart:

STROPHE 16

Dieu vous gard, jeunesse divine,
Rechaufféz moy l'affection
De tordre les plys de ceste Hynne
Au mieux de leur perfection:
Desilléz moy l'ame assoupie
En ce gros fardeau vicieux,
Et faictes que tousjours j'espie
D'œil veillant les secretz des cieulx...[33]
(III, 147)

In a struggle against Ignorance (vv. 603-612) the Muses face defeat and flee to heaven for refuge. Jupiter redeems his promise and from a «masse De terre, & devant tous les Dieux» (vv. 659-660), fashions and inspires the image of Michel de l'Hospital, and addresses reassuring words to the divinities of poetry freed of all anxiety by the «docte asseurance» of their guide:

EPODE [20]

Ores vous ne craindrez pas,
Seures soubz telle conduitte,

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[32] «Michel de l'Hospital... mettra des ailes aux pieds de l'Ignorance et la fera fuir.» Note by Laumonier.

[33] In his book, on *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom* Eugene F. Rice Jr. states (p. viii): «The meaning of the word *sapientia*, and its vernacular equivalents, changed fundamentally. What happened can best be understood as the moralization of a metaphysical idea, what Ronsard called the 'transformation of contemplation into action' [*L.*, XV, 25, vv. 211-212]. One can see this as the object of wisdom shifts from divine things, to things divine and human and their causes, then to human things alone.» — Rice reports accurately Ronsard's comments in *Des Vertus intellectuelles et moralles* on the superiority of the active over the contemplative life and of the moral over the intellectual virtues. But he gives the impression that the position taken by Ronsard was brought about in the Renaissance. On p. 154, where he discusses fully the passage in *Des Vertus...*, it is seen that Ronsard had merely adopted a point of view expressed by Socrates two millennia earlier. (Cf. *L.*, XVIII, 457 and n. 4). Besides, Ronsard's rejection of the contemplative life and of the intellectual virtues in this discourse was not absolute, nor was it the only attitude he adopted during his life. The verses to which the present note is appended give an initial idea of Ronsard's genuine interest in an intellectual exploration of the secrets of the cosmos. See *L.*, VIII, 86, vv. 21-30; XII, p. 70, vv. 43-58, and my article on «Ronsard's Ethical Thought», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), pp. 358-373. Cf. *RGL*, Part I, pp. 230-236.

De reprendre encor la fuitte
Pour encor voller là bas:
Suyvez donc ce guyde icy,
C'est celuy (Filles) aussi,
Du quel la docte asseurance
Franches de peur vous fera,
Et celuy qui defera
Les souldars de l'Ignorance.
(III, 155-156)

Both the beauty and the gravity of the Muses' mission to the world are suggested in the penultimate triad,[34] in which the merits of l'Hospital as poet, humanist, and man of justice are extolled:

STROPHE 23

C'est luy dont les graces infuses
Ont ramené dans l'univers
Le Chœur des Pierides Muses,
Faictes illsutres par ses vers...

ANTISTROPHE

C'est luy (chanson) que tu reveres
Comme l'honneur de nostre Ciel,
C'est celuy qui aux Loix severes
A faict gouster l'Attique miel:
C'est luy qui la saincte balance
Congnoist, & qui ne bas ne hault,
Juste, son poix douteux n'elance,
La tenant droicte comme il fault:
C'est luy dont l'œil non variable
Notte les meschantz, & les bons,
Et qui contre le heurt des dons
Oppose son cœur imployable.
(III, 160-161)

For Ronsard, then, *docte* was a useful word because, at need, it conveyed either the notion of genuine poetic or artistic skill or that of learning or wisdom. But it sometimes offered a third and very significant possibility — that of a foil or *repoussoir* from the first of these basic meanings to the second.

The third preface of the *Franciade* contains a passage which makes this use of *docte* quite clear and confirms, in Ronsard's last year, a train of thought that goes back to his origins as a poet. «Tout ceux qui escrivent en Carmes», he wrote in 1585, «tant doctes puissent ils estre, ne sont pas Poëtes. Il y a autant de difference entre un Poëte & un versificateur,[35] qu'entre... un venerable Prophete & un Charlatan vendeur de triacles» (XVI, 335). The

[34] Cf. XI, 5, vv. 27-30.

[35] «Sur cette distinction chère à Ronsard, cf. H. Franchet, *Le Poète et son œuvre d'après Ronsard*, pp. 25-35.» Note by Laumonier.

word *docte* is here reserved for those who have acquired the exterior skills of the versifier, but who lack depth of insight into themselves, into the nature of the world and of language. At the end of his life Ronsard discovers once more the substantive thought of Pindar's second Olympian. He no longer raises his voice against some particular rival, but rather in defense of the truth of poetry, which has no place for the μαθόντες, the learners deprived of innate *vertu*, who think that the profundities of this art can be acquired as though they were a technique to be light-heartedly come by.

One must distinguish Ronsard's scorn for the *versificateur*[36] from his respect for the art of versification. If that art is, in one regard, the pretty contrivance that enables the versifier to chatter in meter and rhyme, it is far more significantly an essential part of the medium in which the true poet lives. A deep respect for the powers of versification emerges in Ronsard's defense of the decasyllable which Charles IX had mistakenly obliged him to adopt for the *Franciade*: «Or venons à nos vers communs de dix à unze syllabes, lesquels pour estre plus courts & pressez, contraignent les Poëtes de remascher & ruminer plus longuement: & telle contrainte en meditant & repensant fait le plus souvent inventer d'excellentes conceptions,[37] riches paroles & phrases elabourees, tant vault la meditation... quand la bride de la contrainte arreste & refreint la premiere course impetueuse des fureurs & monstrueuses imaginations de l'esprit...» (XVI, 348).

What it is vital to observe in these lines is not Ronsard's rationalization of the use of the decasyllable in his epic, but his comment on the great contributions that the seeming confinements of versification can make toward the liberation of the beauty and intellectual substance which come to birth in the poet's mind. We witness here, quite independently, no doubt, of any textual relationship to the second Olympian, something akin to the process by which the fusion of the concept of wisdom with its aesthetic expression takes place. This is evident in Ronsard's repeated references to meditation, his allusion to the invention of «excellentes conceptions», and his desire to bridle «la premiere course impetueuse des fureurs & monstrueuses imaginations de l'esprit», which is so reminiscent of Pindar's condemnation of poets who are «turbulent and intemperate of tongue» (Ol., II, 86-87).

The contrast between *versificateur* and poet, in essence the same contrast that Pindar states so forcefully in the second Olympian, occurs several times

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[36] Cf. Ronsard's *Art poëtique*, XIV, 16, lines 249-258; XI, 160-161.

[37] In the same preface he says, «... celuy... qui aura l'esprit plus plein de prudence & d'advis, & les conceptions plus divines, & les paroles plus rehaussées et recherchées, bien assises en leur lieu par art & non à la volée, donne luy nom de Poete, & non au versificateur...» (XVI, 345-346); cf. XIV, 12, lines 171-174.

in Ronsard's verse and prose. Perhaps the most meaningful of these passages in found in the *Elegie... à J. Grevin* (1561):

Deux sortes il y a de mestier sur le mont
Où les neuf belles Seurs leurs demeurances font:
L'un favorise à ceux qui riment & composent,
Qui les vers par leur nombre arrengent & disposent
Et sont du nom de vers dicts versificateurs:
Ils ne sont que de vers seulement inventeurs,
Froids, gelez & glacez, qui en naissant n'apportent
Sinon un peu de vie, en laquelle ils avortent...
... car Phebus Apollon
Ne les a point touchez de son aspre éguillon.
Ils sont comme apprentis, lesquels n'ont peu atteindre
A la perfection d'escrire ny de peindre...
L'autre preside à ceux qui ont la fantasie
Esprise ardentement du feu de Poësie,
Qui n'abusent du nom, mais à la verité
Sont remplis de frayeur & de divinité.
Quatre ou cinq seulement sont apparus au monde,
De Grecque nation, qui ont à la faconde
Accouplé le mystere, & d'un voile divers
Par fables ont caché le vray sens de leurs vers,
A fin que le vulgaire, amy de l'ignorance,
Ne comprist le mestier de leur belle science...
Dieu les tient agitez, & jamais ne les laisse,
D'un aguillon ardant il les picque & les presse.
Ils ont les pieds à terre & l'esprit dans les Cieux...

(XIV, 195-197)

Here again the relationship between Ronsard's *Elegie* and Pindar's second Olympian is not primarily textual, but conceptual. He has made Pindar's ideas and sentiments his own and enriched them from other readings and from his own experience and reflections. «Mais il faut reconnaître», Laumonier wrote in one of his most clairvoyant observations concerning Pindar's influence on Ronsard, «que cette favorable influence s'est surtout fait sentir en dehors des odes pindariques et après leur publication, à partir du jour où Ronsard cessa de copier son modèle, s'en éloigna et laissa s'infiltrer les réminiscences dans sa mémoire et son imagination, quand enfin il écrivit ses *Hymnes*, ses *Poëmes* et ses *Discours*. Alors seulement apparut tout le bénéfice qu'il a retiré de son commerce intime et prolongé avec Pindare; alors surtout se déploya en tirades entraînantes, en comparaisons splendides, en récits pittoresques et en amples alexandrins, cette éloquence lyrique qui permet de rapprocher Ronsard de V. Hugo» (*RPL*, p. 337).

The Pindaric reminiscences in the *Elegie* to Grevin are not far to seek. The «apprentis» of v. 79 are those who «have only *learnt* the lore of song», the μαθόντες of Pindar's v. 86, who have acquired the profession of «ceux qui riment & composent... arrengent & disposent» (vv. 67-68), poets who are made, not born. In his moments of deliberate judgment, when he was not

pitting a vapid pseudo-Anacreon against the Theban eagle, as in the *Elegie... à... Choiseul* (VIII, 351-358), Ronsard would not, I think, have excluded Pindar from the group of four or five poets «De Grecque nation» (v. 88), who «Par fables [myths] ont caché le vray sens de leurs vers» (v. 90). He may have discovered, hidden among his memories, an allusion to «many an arrow that is vocal to the wise» (Ol., II, 83-85), so that «le vulgaire» (v. 91), Pindar's «crowd», τὸ πὰν of v. 85, might not find facile access to a meaning which passed their comprehension by its profound simplicity.

V. Otherworldliness in Pindar

«His mind is 'flying all abroad' as Pindar says, measuring earth and heaven.»

In a page whose intellectual beauty is enhanced by its Hellenic sobriety of expression Arthur O. Lovejoy has examined in *The Great Chain of Being* the substance of the idea of otherworldliness. At the risk of inconsistency with a thought for which I was indebted to him when I considered the general outlines of the present study (Part I, p. 14), I am compelled, because of its length, to present that page here in an abbreviated, but, I hope, unwounded form:

«By 'otherworldliness'... I mean the belief that both the genuinely 'real' and the truly good are radically antithetic in their essential characteristics to anything to be found in man's natural life... The world we now and here know — various, mutable, a perpetual flux of states and relations of things, or an ever-shifting phantasmagoria of thoughts and sensations, each of them lapsing into nonentity in the very moment of its birth — seems to the otherworldly mind to have no substance in it... But the human will, as conceived by the otherworldly philosophers, not only seeks but is capable of finding some final fixed, immutable, intrinsic, perfectly satisfying good, as the human reason seeks, and can find, some stable, definitive, coherent, self-contained, and self-explanatory object or objects of contemplation. Not, however, in this world is either to be found but only in a 'higher' realm of being differing in its essential nature... from the lower. That other realm, though to those enmeshed in matter... it appears cold and tenuous and barren of interest and delight, is, to those who have been emancipated through reflection or emotional disillusionment, the final goal of the philosophic quest and the sole region in which either the intellect or the heart of man, ceasing, even in this present life, to pursue shadows, can find rest.»[38]

[38] Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, pp. 25-26.

The antithesis between «the genuinely 'real' and the truly good», on the one hand, and «man's natural life», on the other, accounts for the fact, as Lovejoy says (p. 28), that «... otherworldliness has always been compelled in practice to make terms with this world and has often been instrumental to ends foreign to its principles». Few things illustrate better both the antithesis and coexistence of the otherworldly and worldly spirits than two stories told about Thales, the Milesian astronomer. «It is said that once, when he was taken out of doors by an old woman in order that he might observe the stars, he fell into a ditch, and his cry for help drew from the old woman the retort, 'How can you expect to know all about the heavens, Thales, when you cannot even see what is just before your feet?'»[39] Aristotle's version of the second story relates that Thales «knew by his skill in the stars while it was yet winter that there would be a great harvest of olives in the coming year; so, having a little money, he gave deposits for the use of all the olive-presses in Chios and Miletus, which he hired at a low price because no one bid against him. When the harvest-time came, and many were wanted all at once and of a sudden, he let them out at any rate which he pleased, and made a quantity of money. Thus he showed the world that philosophers can easily be rich if they like, but that their ambition is of another sort».[40]

The coexistence of the worldly and otherworldly spirits in Pindar is not as easily discerned as it is in these stories about Thales. Otherworldliness is by definition a deeply introspective attitude that instinctively turns from secular toward spiritual experience. Yet by their very nature the triumphal odes demanded that the poet address the physical achievements of others rather than his own spiritual reflections. The performance of an ode was a considerable social event, often carried out with great pomp and circumstance at a princely Court. This, too, would seem to exclude the possibility of the intrusion of an otherworldly outlook into the odes. Croiset (p. 111) describes what the poet was called upon to celebrate as «Cette victoire agonistique, qui semble à première vue un fait mesquin, prosaïquement renfermé dans les limites de la réalité la plus individuelle et la plus actuelle...» The demonstration of Pindar's indifference to otherworldly considerations would seem to be incontrovertible when one reads the following words of an author profoundly sympathetic to the ideals that motivated the Theban poet: «And proofs of this kind [athletic victories as proofs of *areté*] were necessary, for

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[39] R.D. Hicks, ed. and tr., *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 2 vols., (Cambridge, Mass., London, 1959), I, 35.

[40] Benjamin Jowett's translation of the *Politica*, 1259 a 16-18, vol. X of the Oxford Aristotle.

the values in which Pindar believed were no other-worldly abstractions; they had to be fulfilled and realized in life» (Fränkel, p. 488).

Nevertheless, one would be ill-advised to assume that these observations on the social function and the particularism of the triumphal ode represent the full reality of Pindar's attitude. Fränkel himself will say (p. 506) that «the transitory and the unique were to him no more than illustrations of the universal and eternal... While at the beginning [with Archilochus] reality, starting with physical objects, was on principle accepted in all its earthiness, now, starting from physical appearance, it was equally on principle denatured and spiritualized.»[41]

Evidence of this powerful tendency is everywhere present in Pindar's odes. Though he was generous in praise of the victor in a particular event who may have commissioned the ode, he almost never gave much attention to the details of the contest, and the victor himself remained without individuality in the poet's account (Fränkel, p. 494). «... nous savons... que certains reprochaient à Pindare d'oublier assez vite un client, fût-il un roi puissant, pour se livrer à ses thèmes les plus chers...» (Duchemin, p. 91). These themes were often of a religious nature, since the Games were great national festivals held under the patronage of the loftiest divinities of the Greek pantheon, especially of Zeus and Apollo, and in view of all the city-states of Hellas.

The various activities associated with the competitions — from the preparatory stages of the training of the athletes, to their active participation in the events, and the final celebration of the victory — might give rise at every step, in the mind of a thoughtful individual, to philosophic reflections whose depth and sincerity revealed the personality of the witness of the Games. If that witness were a poet like Pindar, the myths that these occasions evoked in the odes — a treasury in symbolic form of the most significant intellectual and spiritual experiences of the Greek people — entered into the substance of his poems, determined their structure, and gave them much of their meaning and affective power.

In attempting to understand the quality of otherworldliness in the poetry of Pindar one comes to realize that that quality has deep affinities with the symbolism in which it is clothed. It does not seek, it rarely, possibly never, achieves the explicit expression it would have in a philosophic work. Commenting in his notes on the eighth Olympian, which celebrates the victory of Alcimedon of Aigina, Gildersleeve wrote (p. 192), «... the universal of the Aeginetan odes is often so pegged in the knotty entrails of the particular that

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[41] Cf. Croiset, p. 111: «Le poète part de là, et sans effort, sans violence, tantôt effleure l'infinie diversité des choses réelles, tantôt s'élance hardiment vers le mythe et vers l'idéal.» See Duchemin, p. 287.

it is hard to set it free». The image is striking and just, and not without some bearing on our present inquiry, but one must discriminate carefully in relating it to the otherworldly sentiments of Pindar. It is not in the particular and the immediate that one may expect to find the objects of contemplation to which the heart and mind of Pindar turned in moments of visionary felicity, for these moments arose in withdrawal from the given, the immediately present. He had no interest in «an empirical stocktaking of all accessible reality». «His poetry never stoops to the level of everyday life. It remains always on the lofty peaks...» (Fränkel, p. 491).

When Plato in the *Theaetetus* (173 E) wished to describe the otherworldly withdrawal of the genuine philosopher, a Pindaric image came to his mind: «For he does not hold aloof in order that he may gain a reputaiton; but the truth is, that the outer form of him only is in the city: his mind, disdaining the littlenesses and nothingnesses of human things, is 'flying all abroad' as Pindar says, measuring earth and heaven and the things which are under and on the earth and above the heaven, interrogating the whole nature of each and all in their entirety, but not condescending to anything which is within reach.»[42]

Zeus and Apollo are almost universally present in Pindar's odes, but one need not have read many of them to recognize the truth of the observation that «partout... on sent qu'Apollon est le dieu le plus proche de sa pensée...» (Duchemin, p. 340). And, one may add, «le plus proche de son cœur», for the intimate affinities between Pindar the lyrist and the god of the lyre spring from an identical instinct.

«Withdrawal is in the nature of Apollo... In Delphi, Delos, and other cult sites it was believed that he always abode for part of the year in a remote and secret place... The Delphian myth makes his resort the fabulous land of the Hyperboreans... 'No ship and no traveller can reach that land.'[43] There dwell the holy people that know neither sickness nor old age, for whom trouble and struggle do not exist.[44] In their sacrificial festivals Apollo takes delight; everywhere there is the music of maiden choirs, lyres, and flutes, and glistening laurel crowns the heads of the celebrants...[45] only those Apollo had chosen saw that fabulous country... there 'Phœbus's ancient garden' was located... His remoteness is uncommonly illuminating for the nature of Apollo. If we compare him with Athena, the great difference between them

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[42] Puech, IV, 233, has reconstituted the hypothetical fragment of Pindar from Plato's text.

[43] Pyth., X, 29-30.

[44] Pyth., X, 41-44.

[45] Pyth., X, 37-40.

become clear instantaneously. Just as she is the ever-near, so is he the withdrawn... His chosen ones are not the men of action.»[46]

The country of the Hyperboreans, of the people 'beyond the North Wind', could be reached neither by water nor by land — it existed only in the minds of those who created, and those who, like Pindar, received and transmitted the myth. As one reads of the blissful life of the Hyperboreans, so like the existence of those who inhabit the Blessed Islands of Pindar's second Olympian, one may be charmed into imagining that these utopias were intended to be little more than superior versions of the life of worldlings. That would be to forget that Apollo is the god of withdrawal and detachment from the life of the world, that his «chosen ones are not the men of action», but of contemplation, and that the Hyperboreans are his worshippers, a «holy people». Plato's allusions to the Islands of the Blest in the *Gorgias* (526 C) and the *Republic* (540 B) leave no doubt that those Islands were not simply a hedonistic reconstitution of earthly life. What Plato proposed was a philosophic restatement of the symbolic significance of the myths as Hellenic tradition and Pindar related them. «Dans ce dernier passage [de la *République*], les gardiens s'en vont après leur mort habiter les îles des bienheureux... et goûter la contemplation qu'ils auront ici-bas partiellement sacrifiée au devoir civique.»[47]

In the *Homeric Hymn to Delian Apollo* (131 f.) one reads that at the moment of his birth the infant deity spoke out among the immortals: «The lyre and the curved bow shall ever be dear to me, and I will declare to men the unfailing will of Zeus» (Evelyn-White, p. 333). «Muse! be thou mine oracle», said Pindar, «and I shall be thine interpreter» (frag. 150, p. 601). On the divine and human levels respectively, the parallelism, more exactly, the concatenation, between the thought of the god and the words of his poet is evident. Pindar stood in the same relation to the Muses, Apollo's choir, as Apollo to Zeus.

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[46] W.F. Otto, *The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion*, trans. by Moses Hadas (New York, 1954), pp. 63-64, cf. p. 78.

[47] E. Des Places, *Pindare et Platon*, p. 141. — In the following section on «Otherworldliness in Ronsard» I have not commented on his treatment of the Islands of the Blest, the Elysian Fields, and the land of the Hyperboreans. Many of his allusions to them are brief passing references. Most of the longer ones recount, sometimes in beatiful verse, the reunions in the afterlife of the spirits of those who had loved greatly on earth. Perhaps the finest of these is the *Chanson* for Hélène, *Plus estroit que la Vigne*... (XVII, 235-238). But in general it is fair to say that Ronsard understood these utopias as superior versions of the life of worldlings. One of his most fully developed accounts of the «champs delicieux, Heureux sejours des Espritz precieux», is devoted to the meeting in the Elysian Fields between the spirit of Beaumont, Charles IX's greyhound, and the shade of «Courte, chienne du Roy»! Even in *Les Isles fortunées* one hardly detects the sense of otherworldliness that characterizes Pindar's conception of these mythological regions of supreme blessedness.

The kinship between the lyre and the bow will not seem fanciful to anyone familiar with the Greek genius for the creation of plastic symbols for intellectual concepts. «The same verb which is used for striking the strings of a musical instrument [*psallō*] is frequently applied to the snapping touch of the bowstring... 'The bow twanged and the string sang aloud', we read in the *Iliad* [IV, 125]... Odysseus strung [the bow] 'as a man who is skilled with the lute and practised in singing easily stretches the string on a new-made peg of his lyre... [*Od.*, XXI, 406ff.]'.»[48]

In the prelude of the ninth Olympian Pindar, addressing himself, but speaking as the prophet of the Muses, blends the images of the bow and the lyre in a single symbol of word-arrow and song: «But now, from the bow of the far-darting Muses, do thou shoot a shower of such shafts of song as these, at Zeus... and speed thou to Pytho also a winged arrow sweet, for not unto the ground shall fall the words thou shalt essay, while trilling the lyre...» The symbolism here is essentially the same as that of the passage in the second Olympian in which Pindar asserts that the arrows in his quiver are «vocal to the wise», and defines the true poet as one who holds his gift from nature (83-86). It is with these passages in mind that Jacqueline Duchemin wrote (p. 25): «Il semble que le poète s'identifie en quelque sorte avec son dieu et lui emprunte, pour le servir mieux, ses attributs... L'association est étroite entre l'évocation de l'arc et celle de la phorminx.»[49] It is not without significance that Pindar's observations in the second Olympian on the esoteric character of his art should come immediately after his luminous description of an otherworldly life in the Blessed Isles.

Despite the compelling commitment to the «here and now» imposed by his unavoidable concern with athletic contests, Pindar was not a stranger to «the powerful tendency of the soul to fly aloft into a heaven of contemplation» that we have noted in Ronsard (Part I, p. 230). There is hardly an ode in which this tendency is not felt. Every page of his poetry breathes a spirit of emancipation from those temporal clogs which impede, or quite destroy, our ideal intellectual motion.

Perhaps better examples can be found than the brief and enchanting fourteenth Olympian to illustrate this aspect of Pindar's poetry, but there are persuasive reasons for beginning here. Written to honor the victory of the youth Asopichus of Orchomenus in a foot-race, it is one of the odes in

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[48] Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[49] From the discreet tone of these comments it is clear that the identification of Pindar with Apollo is, in the poet's thought, merely implicit. This was not true in the case of Ronsard, whose sense of identity with the god was sometimes expressed in very explicit language, but almost always with genuine reverence. See Part I, Chap. VII.

which the contestant, and the «here and now» surrounding him, are largely ignored by the poet. «La vériable source de son inspirtion», says Puech (I, 155), «est... moins dans l'éloge du vainqueur que dans celui des *Grâces*, des *Charites*...» Personifications of loveliness, the Graces are «present at all divine and human celebrations where Olympian joy prevails. They bestow their qualities of beauty and charm, on the one hand physical beauty (*Anth. Pal.*, 7.60), on the other intellectual, artistic, and moral 'wisdom, beauty, and glory' (Pind. *Ol.*, 14.6)».[50]

«Poets have admired... greatly»[51] this hymn to the Charites: «Ye that have your portion beside the waters of Cephisus! Ye that dwell in a home of fair horses! Ye Graces of fertile Orchomenus, ye queens of song that keep watch over the ancient Minyae,[52] listen to my prayer! For, by your aid, all things pleasant and sweet are accomplished for mortals, if any man be skilled in song, or be fair to look upon, or hath won renown. Yea, not even the gods order the dance or the banquet, without the aid of the holy Graces. Nay, rather, they are the ministrants of all things in heaven, where their thrones are set beside the Lord of the golden bow, the Pythian Apollo, and where they adore the ever-flowing honour of the Olympian Father.

«O queen Aglaia, and Euphrosyne, that lovest the dance and song, ye daughters of the mightiest of the gods! may ye listen now; and thou Thalia, that art enamoured of the song and dance, when thou hast looked upon this triumphant chorus, as it lightly steppeth along in honour of the victor's good fortune. For I have come to sing the praise of Asopichus with Lydian tune and with meditated lays, because, thanks to thee, the house of the Minyae is victorious in Olympia.

«Now! hie thee, Echo, to the dark-walled home of Persephone, and bear the glorious tidings to the father, so that, when thou hast seen Cleodamus, thou mayest tell him that, beside the famous vale of Pisa, his son hath crowned his youthful locks with garlands won from the ennobling games.»

As a sensitive and reverent meditation on all spiritual things on earth and in heaven the fourteenth Olympian is without compare among Pindar's odes. Sandys was well-inspired in his translation of verses 17-18 to follow Gildersleeve (p. 239): «With Lydian tune and meditated lays.» Finley, who describes the Graces as «inward figures of Pindar's imagination», also senses the contemplative quality of the ode, for he too writes (p. 78): «In Lydian strain and meditated verse...» Wilamowitz (p. 151, n. 1), believes that

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[50] G.M.A. Hanfmann, «Charites», *OCD*, p. 184, col. 1.

[51] Gildersleeve, p. 237, who informs us that in Orchomenus, an ancient city of Pindar's Boeotia, «the Charites were worshipped from the earliest times».

[52] «The ancient inhabitants of Orchomenus.» Note by Sandys.

«neben dem Gesange wird es [the word μελέτα in v. 18] komplementär die Tätigkeit des Dichters, ἐν Μούσαις könnte dafür stehen; μελέτη ist ja selbst eine Muse».[53]

The Graces, like Apollo and the Muses, «adore the ever-flowing honour of the Olympian Father». «Le génie de Pindare», says Des Places, «l'emporte souvent dans les sphères célestes; l'Olympe lui offre un objet de contemplation inassouvie...»[54] One becomes aware of this on first acquaintance with Pindar in the prelude of Olympian I: «Even as water is most excellent, while gold, like fire flaming at night, gleameth more brightly than all other lordly wealth; even so, fond heart, if thou art fain to tell of prizes won in the games, look not by day for any star in the lonely sky, that shineth with warmth more genial than the sun, nor let us think to praise a place of festival more glorious than Olympia. Thence cometh the famous song of praise that enfoldeth the thoughts of poets wise, so that they loudly sing the son of Cronus...»

The victory of Hieron for which Pindar wrote the first Olympian becomes from the first word the point of departure for a series of images in irresistible ascension to the vision of the sun and of Zeus who reigns on Olympus. «The opening of the poem then is intended to inculcate the notion of a supreme value by examples from different fields, in order to elevate the victory now being celebrated into the class of supreme values. Pindar's thought is consistently directed towards values, and this attitude dictates his choice of subject matter, both in what he admits and what he excludes» (Fränkel, p. 472).

In the ninth and concluding chapter of his work, though he makes no specific allusion to the first Olympian, it is with that ode certainly in mind that Fränkel writes: «From the regions to which Pindar has soared, from the thin air and burning light which the value of values cast over these dizzy heights, no path led to a further resting-place» (p. 506).[55]

In the first and fourteenth Olympian odes, in the conclusion of the eighth Pythian and the prelude of the sixth Nemean, in the passages on the Blessed Isles and the life of the Hyperboreans, Pindar crosses the frontier between the «real» and the otherworldly. «Son génie semble avoir toujours hâte de se reposer dans une région haute et calme. Il cherche l'idéal... et délaisse la réalité...» (Croiset, p. 425).

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[53] See O. Gruppe, *Griechische Mythologie*, p. 1077, n.1.

[54] *Pindare et Platon*, p. 71.

[55] Cf. Finley's analysis of the prelude of Isth., V and his illuminating observations on Theia, Mother of the Sun, pp. 53, 144-146.

VI. Otherworldliness in Ronsard

> «[La Philosophie] a delié
> Loing, hors du corps, nostre Ame emprisonnée»

«Ils ont les pieds à terre & l'esprit dans les Cieux» (XIV, 197, v. 101) — one of the profoundly simple insights about the nature of genuine poets and the nature of their calling that the *profanum vulgus*, Ronsard thought, might have difficulty in comprehending, for he goes on to say to Grevin in the following verse, «Le peuple les estime enragez, furieux...» Perhaps because of its intrinsic merits and its strongly antithetical form Laumonier would have considered v. 101 of this *Elegie* as one of the «amples alexandrins» whose lyric eloquence invites rapprochement of Ronsard with Victor Hugo.

It is not a little remarkable that the poet who throughout his life strove so unremittingly for material recognition, for possession of the goods of the earth, should have expressed with such lucidity and sincerity the remotest converse of that attitude, not once, but literally a score of times. This powerful antithesis between the material and the ideal lay entangled in the fabric of a nautre struggling against inner failings intensified by the impediments of society. Cast ineluctably under the dominion of King and Court, Ronsard was nevertheless forever drawn toward a spiritual vision which he longed to possess.

During the period in which he was preparing the two books of the *Hymnes*, published in 1555 and 1556, his mind seems to have turned more than formerly toward otherworldly thoughts. In these years he composed the *Hymne de la Philosophie*, the *Hymne du Ciel*, the *Hymne des Astres*, and the *Hymne de l'Eternité*, all of which in varying degrees reveal a Ronsard to whom a life of withdrawal and contemplation would have been deeply rewarding.[56] It was in 1556 that Louis Le Caron, in the fourth of his *Dialogues* entitled *Ronsard* ou *De la Poësie*, assigned these words to the poet, who was the chief interlocutor: «Quel grand plaisir se donne l'esprit, quand ravi & abstrait des pensements terrestres il cherche & recherche franchement, invente, conçoit, entend, traitte & designe infinis discours, pour trouver la verité, de laquelle la subtile fable lui donne quelque amorce? L'épreuve journaliere fait foi de ce que je di. L'esprit est si noble & haultain, qu'il se monstre plus chiche épargneur d'honnorable louange envers les choses que present

[56] In 1973 I wrote that «Ronsard felt at best only a distant, though genuine, veneration» for «the immutable truth of the celestial spheres» (*RGTP*, p. 387). Today, further study, as the following pages may show, leads me to emphasize the depth and the genuineness, rather than the distance of that veneration. Yet one's opinion must of necessity be *nuancée*, for Ronsard, in this respect, was incurably ambivalent. See *RGTP*, *loc. cit.*, note 121.

il regarde, que celles qui de lui sont plus élongnées» (f° 133 r°). It is to the *Hymne de le Philosophie* that I owe the epigraph of the present section (VIII, 86, vv. 22-23). The same thought occurs in very similar language in *Les Daimons* which appeared in the first book of *Hymnes*. There Ronsard says that the *daimons*, emissaries of the gods, «detachent du corps nos ames prisonnieres Pour les mener là-haut...»[57]

The attraction toward the otherworldly, so visible in the *Hymnes*, was not a sudden manifestation in Ronsard's poetry. From a very early date, in an ode *A Charles de Pisseleu* written in 1549, he recognized that he was unsuited by temperament for most of the professions that a young man of his station in society might embrace. He passes in review those that have in all times engaged man's labor and thought — agriculture, the military life, commerce, the law, politics and government, science, even art — only to spurn them all as infected with the contingencies of life, «various, mutable... an ever-shifting phantasmagoria», lacking the attributes of timelessness, of immortality, that he found in poetry alone:

Mais tels estats incosntans de la vie
Ne m'ont point pleu, & me suis tellement
Eloigné d'eus, que je n'u onq envie
D'abaisser l'œil pour les voir seulement.

L'honneur sans plus du verd laurier m'agrée,
Par lui je hai le vulgaire odieus,
Voila pour quoi Euterpe la sacrée
M'a de mortel fait compagnon des Dieus.
(II, 4)

In the *Hymne triumphal sur le trepas de Marguerite de Valois, Royne de Navarre*, Ronsard contrasts the life of intellectual peace that the Queen of Navarre has found in heaven,[58] with the restless agitation of those who remain below:

Mais nous pouvres & chetifz
Ici n'avons connoissance
Non plus qu'enfans abortifz,
Du lieu de nostre naissance:
Ains volenteux de gesir
Soubs le vicieux plaisir
Des Serenes de la vie,
Jamais ne nous prend envie
(Comme au Grec)[59] de voir un jour
La flamme en l'air promenée

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[57] VIII, 126, vv. 212-213; cf. VIII, 150, vv. 1-4; X, 103, vv. 29-30.

[58] See Part I, pp. 231-232.

[59] «Ulisse qui desiroit voir la fumée de son antique païs...» Note by N. Denisot. Laumonier identifies the source: *Od.*, I, 58.

Sauter sur la cheminée
De nostre antique sejour.
(III, 75-76; cf. VIII, 169; 233)

Laumonier's note surely interprets the final verses in the sense intended by Ronsard: «Nous n'aspirons pas à rejoindre notre ancienne patrie, qui est le Ciel.»

The contention in Ronsard's spirit between celestial aspirations and terrestrial fetters was a permanent principle of inner disunion. It is a deeply significant and paradoxical symbol of this division between the desired ideal and the practical realities with which he was compelled to compromise, that these realities included in the first place for him, a member of minor orders, the institution of the Church, whose mission presumably was to make plain the way toward the ideal. It was only the Church, in its inherently contradictory character of a humble spiritual and opulent temporal establishment, which by satisfying his material needs and ambitions, could either lead him astray into a comfortable ecclesiastical *mondanité*, or release in him an innate longing for the otherworldly. Ronsard was painfully aware of standing at this crossroad when he wrote to Odet Cardinal de Chastillon in 1560:

Adonc l'ambition s'alluma dans mon cueur,
Credule je conceu la Royale grandeur,
Je conceu Eveschez, Prieurez, Abayes,
Soudain abandonnant les Muses, esbahyes
De me voir transformer d'un escolier contant
En nouveau courtizan, demandeur inconstant.
O que mal aisement l'ambition se couvre!
Lors j'apris le chemin d'aller souvent au Louvre,
Contre mon naturel j'apris de me trouver
Et à vostre coucher & à votre lever...
Apollon, qui souloit m'agréer, me despleut,
Et depuis mon esprit, comme il souloit, ne peut
Se ranger à l'estude, & ma plume fertile,
Faute de l'exercer, se moisit inutile,
Si qu'en lieu d'estre seul, d'apprendre & de sçavoir,
Je brulay du desir d'amasser & d'avoir...
(X, 22-23)

In more serene language and on a more impersonal level of thought, Ronsard in the *Hymne de l'Hyver* (1563) analyzes with genuine insight into the nature of otherworldliness the difference between a philosophy whose Lucretian vision is set upon the heavens, and a philosophy that lacks the courageous wonder to abandon the earth for «these dizzy heights»:

Toute philosophie est en deux divisée.
L'une est aiguë, ardente & prompte & advisée,
Qui sans paresse ou peur, d'un vol audacieux
Abandonne la terre & se promene aux cieux.

Hardis furent les cœurs qui les premiers monterent
Au ciel, & d'un grand soing les Astres affronterent:
Là, sans avoir frayeur des cloistres enflamés
Du monde, où tant de corps divers sont enfermés,
Par leur vive vertu s'ouvrirent une entrée,
Et virent dans le sein la Nature sacrée:
Ils espierent Dieu,[60] puis ils furent apres
Si fiers que de conter aux hommes ses secrets,
Et d'un esprit veinqueur eurent la cognoissance
De ce qui n'est point né, de ce qui prend naissance,
Et en pillant le Ciel, comme un riche butin,
Mirent desoubs leurs pieds Fortune & le Destin.
L'autre philosophie habite sous la nue,
A qui tant seulement cette terre est cognue,
Sans le loger au ciel: le cœur qui luy defaut
Ne luy laisse entreprendre un voyage si haut.
Elle a pour son subject les negoces civilles,
L'equité, la justice, & le repos des villes:
Et au chant de sa lyre a fait sortir des boys
Les hommes forestiers, & leur bailla des loys...[61]
(XII, 70-71)

Had it been possible Ronsard would have joined the ranks of those who «Mirent desoubs leurs pieds Fortune & le Destin». He had understood that «the genuinely 'real' and the truly good are radically antithetic in their essential characteristics to anything to be found in man's natural life». But he was confined by the inescapable postulates of his existence to move in alternation between the poles of this- and otherworldliness, or to remain suspended between them as though each exerted upon him an equal force. In his *Elegie au Roy* of 1567 he says to Charles IX:

Moy qui l'honneur plus que les biens estime,
Né d'une race antique & magnanime,
Franc d'avarice, & pur d'ambition,[62]
Libre de toute humaine passion,
D'un esprit vif, ardent, & volontaire,
Pour la vertu j'ay quitté le vulgaire,
Villes, chasteaux, bourgades & marchez,
Et suys allé par les Antres cachez,
Par les desertz, rivages & montagnes
Suivre les pas des neuf Muses compagnes,
Qui toute nuit m'enseignent par les boys
A n'avoir point autres maistres que Roys...
(XIV, 142)

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[60] Cf. Part I, p. 232 and n. 154, but see XVIII, 97, vv. 11-16, where Ronsard expresses an opposing point of view.

[61] See above, n. 33.

[62] Cf. X, 22, v. 111.

In these verses Ronsard utters two truths whose sincerity is beyond question, but that are virtually impossible to reconcile. He had indeed abandoned cities and castles and even the Court «Pour la vertu», but could he succeed «A n'avoir point autres maistres que Roys» and be at the same time «pur d'ambition»? His answer, deeply sincere but insecure, came two years later in *La Salade à Ama. Jamyn*. He supposes that in Jamyn's opinion he was mad to have left the honors and pomp of the Court where he might have lived «Aupres des Grandz en credit». Ronsard does not deny this but says twice in the space of six lines, a form of emphasis most unusual for him, «... je ne le veuz faire, Car telle vie à la mienne est contraire» (XV, p. 78).

Almost a decade later he writes an ode in somewhat the same vein to his friend Simon Nicolas urging the abandonment of worldly ambitions and the appetite for accumulating material possessions:

Nicolas, faison bonne chere
Tandis qu'en avons le loisir,
Trompon le soin & la misere,
Ennemis de nostre plaisir.
Purgeon l'humeur qui nous enflame
D'avarice & d'ambition:
Ayon Philosophes une ame
Toute franche de passion.
Chasson le soin, chasson la peine,
Contentons nous de nostre rien:
Quand nostre ame sera bien saine,
Tout le corps se portera bien.
Une ame de biens affamee
Nous perd le sens & la raison:
Il ne faut qu'un peu de fumee
Pour noircir toute la maison.
Faire conqueste sur conqueste
De biens amassez sans propos,
Ce n'est que nous rompre la teste,
Et ne trouver jamais repos.
J'ai raclé de ma fantaisie
Le monde au visage eshonté,
Pour vacquer à la Poësie
Quand j'en auray la volonté.
Voila le bien que je desire,
Sans plus en vain me tourmenter:
Desormais sera mon Empire
Que sçavoir bien me contenter.
(XVII, 370-371)

In the first posthumous edition the two final versees were significantly changed:

Afin que mon ame n'empire
Par faute de se contenter.

The eleventh Nemean is conjecturally dated 446 B.C.[63] It is one of the last of Pindar's odes known to us, written when he was in his 72nd year. As one might expect, it reflects the somber thoughts of a sensitive and gifted poet who had experienced in his own life and in the life of Greece both the normal and the cataclysmic vicissitudes of the fifth century. But his experiences and his thoughts were not all somber — the very notion of vicissitude refuses that possibility, especially in the case of one whose days were sometimes illuminated by moments of intense creative intuition.

The eleventh Nemean is not a victory ode in the usual sense. It was composed for Aristagoras of Tenedos on his election for a year as President of the Council. The tone of celebration, even of festivity, is not absent, but one hears in a minor key notes whose universality saves them from melancholy: «Heaven grant that he may pass with glory the twelve-month office with heart unscathed. As for the man, I deem his father Hagesilas blessed, and I praise his own goodly frame, and his inborn constancy of soul. But if any man who hath riches, excelleth others in beauty of form, and is wont to display prowess by his courage in the games, let him remember that the limbs he is robing are mortal, and that the last vesture of all will be a shroud of earth» (9-16).[64]

To the best of my knowledge the eleventh Nemean ode was among those that Ronsard had probably studied the least. The very universality of Pindar's *memento mori* to Aristagoras, expressed in the commonplaces that such a theme invites, makes it appear rather unlikely, though not impossible, that anything analogous in Ronsard may have been suggested by the passage in the eleventh Nemean. Thus, when he writes in the *Elegie sur le trepas d'Antoine Chateignier* that his friend's soul «est bien heureuse D'avoir quité sa vesture boüeuse Pour s'envoler au ciel» (V, 248), or in the *Epitaphe de Artuse de Vernon* that she «laissa sa belle robbe humaine Sous terre» (VIII, 325), one may safely assume that we are dealing with a Judeo-Christian topos. It is less easy to make this assumption with respect to the verses of a sonnet (*Helas! voicy le jour...*) composed on the day of Charles IX's funeral. Charles, Ronsard says, who but now flourished in royal grandeur, «Est maintenant vestu d'une robbe de terre» (XVII, 239). The resemblance between this line and vv. 15-16 of Nemean XI is so striking that one hesitates to rule out the possibility that this echo of Pindar's ode was still present in Ronsard's mind.

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[63] See Sandys, p. 426; Bowra, *Pindar*, p. 413.

[64] I have modified somewhat Sandys' translation with the aid of J.B. Bury's eidtion of the *Nemean Odes*. — Cf. Nemean VIII, 38, where Pindar, in words similar to those of Nem., XI, anticipates his own death.

More frequently perhaps than Pindar he brooded on the thought that man is inexorably «enmeshed in matter». In an early sonnet to Cassandre (*Avant qu'Amour...*) he says that before Eros had transformed his spirit, «mon tout erroit seditieux Dans le giron de ma lourde matiere» (IV, 45).[65] An epigram of Palladas (*Gr. Anth.*, XI, 349) recommended that a certain geometer, before attempting to measure the Earth, should first «reckon thy body's little store of clay».[66] In his translation Ronsard imparted a rather heavy moralizing tone to the good-humored moderation of Palladas: «Si mesurer tu n'as pouvoir De ton corps la fangeuse ordure...» (V, 86).[67] These verses remained unchanged throughout the first six collective editions, but in the definitive version of 1587 they were replaced by something nearer to the intention of Palladas — a gentle, humane restatement of the Delphic «Know thyself»: «Si homme tu n'as le pouvoir De te cognoistre & ta nature...»[68]

In the preface of the *Livre de Meslanges* of 1560 Ronsard considers music a touchstone capable of discriminating between the finer spirits among mankind and «ceux qui sont engourdiz, paresseux, & abastardiz en ce corps mortel, ne se souvenant de la celeste armonie du ciel, non plus qu'aux compagnons d'Ulisse d'avoir esté hommes, apres que Circe les eut transformés en porceaux» (XVIII, 481-482).

The eleventh Nemean, Finley tells us (p. 76), is «usually taken as of Pindar's extreme age». Ronsard was a young man when he wrote that the soul of Antoine Chateignier was fortunate to have «quité sa vesture boüeuse», but essentially the same thought, deepened by a reminiscence of Sophocles and by his Christian aspirations, accompanied him to his final moments when he thus closed the last sonnet of the *Derniers vers*:

> Heureux qui ne fut onc, plus heureux qui retourne
> En rien comme il estoit,[69] plus heureux qui sejourne
> D'homme fait nouvel ange aupres de Jesuchrist,
>
> Laissant pourrir ça bas sa despouille de boüe
> Dont le sort, la fortune, & le destin se joüe,
> Franc des liens du corps pour n'estre qu'un esprit.[70]
>
> (XVIII, 181)

It would be inaccurate to say of Ronsard what Fränkel (p. 491) says of Pindar, that «His poetry never stoops to the level of everyday life». The

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[65] Cf. VIII, 253, vv. 117-126; X, 104, vv. 55-56; 318, v. 70; XV, 97, vv. 313-330.

[66] W.R. Paton's edition, IV, 233.

[67] Cf. V, 193, v. 29; VIII, 98, vv. 214-215; X, 311, v. 75; XVIII, 328, vv. 21, 34-35.

[68] See *RGTP*, pp. 303-305, for an account of the migrations of Ronsard's translation of Palladas through the successive editions and his final recognition that the admonitory force of the Greek epigram was better conveyed without the grim language of his earlier versions.

[69] Cf. V. 78, vv. 20-22; IV, 50, vv. 9-12.

[70] Cf. VIII, 233, vv. 104-105.

evidence to the contrary is overwhelming. But though he did not remain «always on the lofty peaks», it is true of Ronsard, as it is of every great poet, that he experienced moments of visionary exaltation in withdrawal from the given, the immediately present. One of his first odes is addressed *A la forest de Gastine*. For Ronsard in those early years no spot on earth so nearly resembled «Phœbus's ancient garden», or possessed such power of poetic evocation as the silent recesses of the forest near his home:

Couché sous tes ombrages vers,
Gastine je te chante,
Autant que les Grecs par leurs vers
La forest d'Erymanthe.[71]

Car malin celer je ne puis
A la race future
De combien obligé je suis
A ta belle verdure:

Toy qui sous l'abry de tes bois
Ravy d'esprit m'amuses:[72]
Toy qui fais qu'à toutes les fois
Me respondent les Muses:

Toy par qui de l'importun soin
Tout franc je me delivre,
Lors qu'en toy je me pers bien loin,
Parlant avec un livre.
(*S.*, III, 151)[73]

When the menace of destruction hung over Gâtine in 1573, Ronsard expressed in one of his most moving elegies the immense personal significance of the loss of the groves[74] among which the god of the lyre had first revealed the poet to himself:

Adieu vieille forest, le jouët de Zephyre,
Où premier j'accorday les langues de ma lyre,
Où premier j'entendi les fleches resonner
D'Apollon, qui me vint tout le cœur estonner...
(XVIII, 145; cf. XII, 47-48)

It is a fair question whether certain of the sonnets for Cassandre or Hélène may be cited in relation to Ronsard's otherworldliness. For the creation of sequences of such scope the poet had to cast about for themes in

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[71] Mountain in Arcadia, the haunt of the boar destroyed by Heracles.

[72] M'occupes. Huguet, s.v. *amuser*.

[73] I have preferred the 1587 version to that of 1550 (*L.*, I, 243-245), because it more clearly illustrates the theme of the present section.

[74] See XVIII, 143, n. 4.

every direction, and it would be legitimate to ask how deeply he felt some of the verses in which otherworldly ideas are expressed. No doubt it is best to let the poems speak for themselves. They will reveal, at least, the extent of Ronsard's understanding of a momentous issue, and, at most, the degree of spiritual commitment of which he was capable.

Sonnet LXII (*Les Elementz, & les Astres...*) is one of a group which describes the ethical power of his love for Cassandre. The tercets in particular emphasize the notion of a mystical withdrawal into an almost inacessible realm of Platonic Ideas:

> Son œil premier m'apprit que c'est d'aymer:
> Il vint premier ma jeunesse animer
> A la vertu, par ses flammes dardées.
>
> Par luy mon cœur premierement s'aisla,
> Et loing du peuple à l'escart s'en vola
> Jusque au giron des plus belles Idées.[75]
>
> (IV, 64)

Even more intense, mounting with an even more irresistible motion of withdrawal from the impediments of the mortal body and of the world, is the conclusion of sonnet CXXXIX, so reminiscent of Du Bellay's *Si nostre vie est moins qu'une journée*:

> O sainct brazier, ô feu chastement beau,
> Las, brusle moy d'un si chaste flambeau
> Qu'abandonant ma despouille cognue,
>
> Nét, libre, & nud, je vole d'un plein sault,
> Oultre le ciel, pour adorer là hault
> L'aultre beaulté dont la tienne est venue.[76]
>
> (IV, 135)

When Jean de Amelin (or Hamelin) published his *Traduction de la 3^e^ decade de Tite-Live* in 1559 Ronsard provided it with a prefatory *Elegie* whose title in 1567 became *L'Excellence de l'esprit de l'homme*. The prelude of this poem restates in somewhat more sober tones the theme of the spiritual aspect and celestial tendency of man's nature that had inspired the two sonnets for Cassandre:

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[75] «Tout le sonnet LXII suit Pétrarque CLIV [*Le stelle il cielo...*].» Communication of Louis Terreaux, 19 Decembre 1961. — Cf. Henri Weber, *art. cit.* (above, Chap. XXIII, n. 116), p. 168. — See also the first quatrain of sonnet CLXXI (*Celuy qui fit...*) IV, 162, and Muret's comment, n. 2.

[76] Cf. the remarks of Parlamente at the end of the nineteenth *nouvelle* of the *Heptaméron*, and the comments of Abel Lefranc, *Grands écrivains de la Renaissance*, pp. 206-207, esp. his quotation of the words of Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*: «O mon cher Socrate, ce qui peut donner du prix à cette vie, c'est le spectacle de la beauté éternelle.» — See also the quatrains of Ronsard's sonnet addressed to Denisot (*Haulse ton aisle...*), IV, 104-105, esp. the 1587 variant of v. 5.

Nous ne sommes pas nez de la dure semence
Des caillou animez:[77] d'une plus noble essence
Nostre esprit est formé, lequel a retenu
Le naturel du lieu duquel il est venu.
Car tout ainsi que Dieu en variant exerce,
Estant seul simple & un, sa puissance diverse,
Et se monstre admirable en ce grand Univers
Pour la variété de ses effaits divers:
Ainsi nostre ame seule, image trespetite
De l'image de Dieu, le tout puissant imite
D'un sutil artifice, & de sa deité
Nous monstre les effaits par sa diversité.[78]
(X, 101-102)

In the year following the composition of this *Elegie* Ronsard published *La Vertu amoureuse* in the fifth book of the *Poëmes*. From the words that the personification of Vertu addresses to Jérôme de la Rovère it is clear that Ronsard had reflected a good deal on «The world we now and here know... of thoughts and sensations, each of them lapsing into nonentity in the very moment of its birth...», for he says of the lover of Vertu:

En cette terre basse il n'estime rien grand,
Car son esprit au ciel à toute heure se pend,
Où la grandeur de Dieu de si pres il advise
Que toute chose humaine en son cueur il mesprise:
Et rien, tant soit estrange, ou douteux, ou nouveau,
Present ou advenir, n'offense son cerveau.
(X, 346-347)

Ronsard had understood with remarkable insight that «the human will, as conceived by the otherworldly philosophers, not only seeks but is capable of finding some final, fixed, immutable, intrinsic, perfectly satisfying good...», for the lover of Vertu

... tout envelopé d'immobiles raisons
S'enferme d'un rempart clos de philosophie,
Qui meprise le temps & Fortune defie.
(X, 346)

He is wealthy without goods, he is happy in his knowledge of nature and of himself (vv. 211-215), his spirit is forever in movement away from the world. Rarely did Ronsard express more fully the essence of the life of contemplation and of the happiness associated with intellectual activity. Nor did he

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[77] A reference to the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha recreating the human race after the Deluge with the stones of Mother Earth.

[78] I have quoted the text given by Laumonier. In Louis Loviot's article, «Jean de Amelin, traducteur de Tite Live. — Edition originale d'une élégie de Ronsard», *Revue des livres anciens*, I (1913-1914), 104-107, the variants listed do not affect vv. 1-12 quoted above.

ever find, to my knowledge, a more exact, and at the same time, given the abstruse nature of the subject, a more poetic definition of principle and of an otherworldly attachment to it than in the phrase «envelopé d'immobiles raisons».

The *Hymne triumphal sur le trepas de Marguerite de Valois* is essentially a Pindaric ode, as Laumonier observed in the Introduction to vol. III, p. xiv, of his critical edition. The first words of the title are in fact a fair translation of ἐπινίκιον, triumphal ode or hymn. When Ronsard says at the beginning «Assés Pindare a chanté Les jeux d'Hercule, & sa gloire...» (III, 55), he is asserting that the agon of the athletic games of Greece would not lend itself to the theme of his hymn. He is about to write of a different sort of contest, a Christian psychomachy announcing Marguerite's victory in the struggle of «Sa Chair tentant le moien D'asservir l'Esprit son maistre...» (III, 57).

It is a struggle between two groups of personified abstractions. Among those who fight in the host led by la Chair is «le Monde emplumé De grands crestes undoiantes» (vv. 61-62), while in the battalions led by l'Esprit are found

> les Contemplations,
> Avecques les Passions[79]
> Que l'Ame fidele endure
> Pour corriger la Chair dure...
> (III, 62)

The soul of Marguerite emerges triumphant from the contention of Flesh and Spirit,

> Esprit abstraict, ravy, et ecstatic,
> Qui frequentant les cieulx, ton origine,
> As delaissé ton hoste et domestic,
> Ton corps concords,[80] qui tant se morigine...[81]

and is released to fly toward heaven where it «can find some stable, definitive, coherent, self-contained, and self-explanatory object or objects of contemplation».[82]

In his apostrophe to the vault of heaven in the *Hymne du Ciel* the spirit of Ronsard, in profound meditation, emulates that of Marguerite de Navarre:

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[79] «Passions, au sens primitif de Souffrances (cf. la Passion du Christ).» Note by Laumonier.

[80] «Harmonieux.» Note by J. Plattard.

[81] «Qui règle ses mœurs.» Note by J. Plattard. — *François Rabelais à l'esprit de la royne de Navarre*, the liminary dizain of the *Tiers livre*, ed. Abel Lefranc *et al.*, V, 2.

[82] See Part I, pp. 230-232.

O qu'à bon droict les Grecz t'ont nommé d'un beau nom![83]
Qui te contemplera ne trouvera sinon
En toy qu'un ornement, & qu'une beauté pure,
Qu'un compas bien reiglé, qu'une juste mesure,
Et bref, qu'un rond parfaict, dont l'immense grandeur,
Hauteur, largeur, bihays, travers, & profondeur
Nous monstrent, en voyant un si bel edifice,
Combien l'Esprit de DIEU est remply d'artifice,
Et subtil artisan, qui te bastît de rien,
Et t'acomplît si beau, pour nous monstrer combien
Grande est sa Majesté, qui hautaine demande
Pour son palais royal une maison si grande.[84]
(VIII, 145)[85]

When in the *Responce aux injures* Ronsard defends his Catholic faith against his Huguenot adversaries it is as though we are hearing the unbroken continuation of the hymn begun almost a decade earlier:

J'ay le chef eslevé pour voir & pour cognoistre
De ce grand univers le seigneur & le maistre,
Car en voyant du ciel l'ordre qui point ne faut,
Je suis tresassuré qu'un Moteur est là haut,
Qui tout sage & tout bon gouverne cest empire,
Comme un Pilote en mer gouverne son navire:
Et que ce grand Palais si largement vosté
De son divin Ouvrier ensuit la volonté.
(XI, 135)

In the 1570s, almost a quarter of a century after he had recounted the agon of Marguerite de Navarre, Ronsard described a similar spiritual conflict that he had endured in his relationship with Hélène de Surgères:

J'errois à la vollee, & sans respect des lois
Ma chair dure à donter me combatoit à force,
Quand tes sages propos despouillerent l'escorce
De tant d'opinions que frivoles j'avois.

En t'oyant discourir d'une si saincte vois,
Qui donne aux voluptez une mortelle entorce,
Ta parole me fist par une douce amorce
Contempler le vray bien duquel je m'esgarois.

Tes mœurs & ta vertu, ta prudence & ta vie
Tesmoignent que l'esprit tient de la Deité:
Tes raisons de Platon, & ta Philosophie,

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[83] «Cosmos, mot grec, qui veut dire orné...» Note by Laumonier.

[84] Weber (pp. 495-496) has, I think, been rather severe in his judgment of this passage. — See also Luzius Keller, *Palingène, Ronsard, Du Bartas,*, pp. 72-73, on its cosmological aspects, and R. Lebègue, *L.*, VIII (3e tirage, 1973, *Appendice*), p. 376, for the Christian ideas in vv. 65-78.

[85] Cf. VIII, pp. 176-177, esp. vv. 297-299; XIII, 163, vv. 65-78.

Que le vieil Promethee est une verité,
Et qu'en ayant la flame à Jupiter ravie,
Il maria la Terre à la Divinité.
(XVII, 232-233)

Alexandre Koyré in the Introduction to his book entitled *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe,*[86] described briefly the abandonment of the otherworldly spirit in the seventeenth century: «It is generally admitted that the seventeenth century underwent, and accomplished, a very radical spiritual revolution of which modern science is at the same time the root and the fruit. This revolution can be — and was — described in a number of different ways. Thus, for instance, some historians have seen its most characteristic feature... in the replacement of the concern for the other world and the other life by preoccupation with this life and this world... others, in the change of relationship between θεωρία and πράξις, the old ideal of the *vita contemplativa* yielding its place to that of the *vita activa*. Whereas mediaeval and ancient man aimed at the pure contemplation of nature and being, the modern one wants domination and mastery.»

There is no doubt a large element of truth in Koyré's description of the preponderant place assumed in the seventeenth century by the active over the contemplative life, though of course absolute positions are ineffectual in this realm of ideas. Neither of these values can ever extirpate the other — they are reciprocally indispensable.

The words of a sixteenth-century poet may perhaps contribute something to the history of the process by which the transformation described by Koyré took place. It will be seen that the sixteenth century anticipated to some extent an aspect of the movement of ideas that he assigns to the seventeenth, and that these ideas may have been very much alive even as early as the fifth century B.C. Modern science may not have been alone in advancing it, though it was most instrumental in doing so.

A passage in Ronsard's *A Monsieur de Belot* (1569) describes the *dédicataire* as a person whose spiritual qualities, like those of Socrates, redeem his unattractive physical appearance:

Tel fut Socrate,[87] & toutefois alors,
En front severe, en œil melancholique,
Estoit l'honneur de la chose publique,
Qui rien dehors, mais au dedans portoit
La saincte humeur dont Platon s'alaittoit,

[86] Baltimore, 1957, p. 1.

[87] «Ronsard s'est inspiré de la comparaison qu'Alcibiade fait, dans le *Banquet* de Platon (p. 215), entre Socrate et les Silènes», note by R. Lebègue. See also his article on «Ronsard lecteur de Rabelais», *BHR*, XVI (1954), 82-85, and *RGL*, Part I, pp. 151-152.

Alcibiade, & mille dont la vie
Se corrigea par la Philosophie,
Que du haut Ciel aux villes il logea,
Reprint le peuple, & les mœurs corrigea:
Et le sçavoir qu'on preschoit aux escolles
Du Cours du Ciel, de l'assiette des Poles,
De nous predire & le mal & le bien,
Et d'embrasser le monde en un lien,
Il eschangea ces discours inutilles
Au reglement des citez & des villes,
Et sage fit la contemplation,
Un œuvre vain, tomber en action.[88]
(XV, 25)

In his prose discourse *Des Vertus intellectuelles et moralles* (1576?) Ronsard transcribed and developed this description of the philosophical activity of Socrates: «Socrate fut le premier lequel, voyant les philosophes auparavant luy s'estre amusez du tout à la congnoissance des meteores & tousjours plantez sur une montagne, avoient les yeux attachez aux nues pour sçavoir les causes des foudres, tonnerres, tempestes, cometes, neges, pluyes, gresles & telles impressions de l'air, luy, cognoissant que cela estoit inutille... il attira la philosophie, qui estoit en l'air... la communicqua aux hommes & la logea dedans les citez, tournant la contemplation en l'action» (XVIII, 457).[89] Ronsard's opinion may have been influenced by a reading of Xenophon who said that Socrates «did not even discuss that topic so favoured by other talkers, 'the nature of the Universe': and avoided speculation on the so-called 'Cosmos' of the Professors, how it works, and on the laws that govern the phenomena of the heavens... In the first place, he would inquire, did these thinkers suppose that their knowledge of human affaires was so complete that they must seek these new fields for the exercise of their brains; or that it was their duty to neglect human affairs and consider only things divine?»[90]

It is difficult to resolve the ambivalence between Ronsard's early attitude toward the contemplative life as expressed, on the one hand, in the hymn on the death of Marguerite de Navarre, in the *Hymne du Ciel*, and in many

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[88] «C.-à-d.: au lieu de l'enseignement théorique et spéculatif donné dans les écoles, celui de Socrate fut pratique et utilitaire» (XV, 25, n. 2). See above, n. 33.

[89] Cf. XVIII, 459, lines 191-197: «Si l'on me dict que la vertu intellectuelle a pour subject les choses celestes, qui point ne faillent... je responds que ce n'est pas grande vertu de contempler & s'amuser à un subject qui ne peut faillir ny tromper.»

[90] *Memorabilia...*, edited with an English translation by E.C. Marchant (New York, 1923), p. 9; cf. pp. 347 f. — Ronsard may also have learned something about Socrates' alleged depreciation of physical and metaphysical speculation from Plato, *Phaedo*, 96, and Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 987 b 1-4 and *De Part. Animalium* 642 a 28-31. — But see A.E. Taylor, *A Commentary on Plato's Timaeus*, pp. 19-22, who refutes the notion that Socrates was not deeply interested in cosmological speculations.

more poems, and, on the other, the position he adopted in 1569 in *A Monsieur de Belot* and in the discourse of 1576 (?). The difficulty becomes virtually inextricable when one reads in the posthumous edition certain verses of Ronsard's elegy *A Philippes des-Portes* written probably in his last year:

(2) Les morts ne sont heureux, d'autant que l'ame vive
Du mouvement principe en eux n'est plus active.[91]
L'heur vient de la vertu, la vertu d'action:
Le mort privé du faire est sans perfection.
L'heur de l'ame, est de Dieu contempler la lumiere:
La contemplation de la cause premiere
Est sa seule action: contemplant elle agist:
Mais au contemplement[92] l'heur de l'homme ne gist.
Il gist à l'œuvre seul, impossible à la cendre
De ceux que la Mort faict soubs les ombres descendre.
(XVIII, 248)

This elegy is followed by three *Annotations de l'Autheur*. The second is on the words «Les morts ne sont heureux»: «C'est l'opinion d'Aristote qui est faulse: car les morts qui meurent en Dieu, sont heureux parfaitement.» In spite of this annotation, the positive influence of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is evident in Ronsard's verses. Nevertheless, there is an apparent contradiction between v. 21, which affirms that the happiness of the *soul* resides in the contemplation of God, and v. 24, which denies to *man* the possibility of happiness in a life of contemplation. It would seem that Ronsard is caught in a dilemma between his theological and philosophical beliefs: philosphically he did not accept the notion of a happiness after death which theologically he refused to deny.[93]

The ambivalences of Ronsard are sometimes lexical as well as philosophical or theological. When they occur in relation to a subject like the one we are pursuing, they may entrap the unwary reader into attributing to the poet a position that he never held.

In the 1587 version of Ronsard's *Discours à... Monseigneur [Philibert] le duc de Savoye*, one reads:

Qui voudroit donc accuser d'injustice
Le Tout-puissant comme auteur de malice,
Si d'une masse il fait un Empereur,
Et de la mesme un pauvre Laboureur?

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[91] Cf. XV, pp. 39-40; XVI, 384, vv. 869-880.

[92] Huguet gives only this example of *contemplement*, but takes it as synonymous with *contemplation*, as do Cotgrave and Nicot.

[93] For a fuller discussion see my article on «Ronsard's Ethical Thought», *BHR*, XXIV (1962), pp. 368-369, and cf. *L.*, VIII, pp. xiv-xv, for a similar point of view expressed by Laumonier.

Il est matiere, & nous sommes la forme,
Qui à son gré nous change & nous transforme.
(*S.*, IV, 296)

It would be absurd to suppose that Ronsard, by employing the expression «Il est matiere»,[94] was assimilating God and man, and asserting, in effect, that God, too, was «enmeshed in matter». In what sense, then, does Ronsard here use the words *matiere* and *forme*?

The answer to this question may be discovered in four or five texts, one dating from 1555, the others from the last two years of his life. Toward the end of the *Hymne de la Mort* (1555) Ronsard says that there is nothing new under heaven, «Mais la forme se change en une autre nouvelle» (VIII, 178, v. 327). In 1584, *Elegie XXIIII* (*Quiconque aura premier...*) concludes with the thought that the world is subject to endless transformations, but «La matiere demeure, & la forme se perd» (XVIII, 147, v. 68). *Hymne X. De Mercure* (*Encore il me restoit...*) states in 1585 that «La matiere tousjours cherche forme nouvelle» (XVIII, 268, v. 64). The *Epitaphe de... sainct André* (*Encor' que ce Tombeau...*) is particularly explicit, again in 1585, when one of the interlocutors, Justice, says to the Passant: «Apprens que la matiere eternelle demeure, Et que la forme change & s'altere à toute heure» (XVIII, 290, vv. 31-32).

If one studies these verses and the passages in which they occur in conjunction with the lines quoted above from the *Discours à... Monseigneur le duc de Savoye*, it becomes clear that for Ronsard, in this sort of context, matter was eternal, and in virtue of that quality, identifiable with God — «Il [Le Tout-puissant] est matiere» — while form, including that of man, was ephemeral. Judging from these passages, the abyss separating God and man would appear to be for Ronsard impassable.

To expect either doctrinal or semantic consistency of him would, however, in the present realm of discourse, be to expect the impossible. In 1555 he had written in *Les Daimons*:

Car DIEU n'est qu'unité, & qu'une simple essence,
Et les corps des humains de *terre* ont pris naissance.
(VIII, 123)

Here, too, Ronsard seems to suggest an unbridgeable chasm betwen God and man. Thirty years later, when he was making the final version of the *Discours* for Philibert de Savoie, and establishing a bond between the eternity of matter and of God, he was at almost the same time amending this passage of *Les Daimons* in a very different sense:

[94] It is employed in the same way in the *Responce aux injures*, XI, 136, v. 371.

Dieu franc de la matiere (ouvriere d'un chacun
Qui respire icy bas) n'est qu'une simple essence:
164 D'un *meslange agencé* nos corps prennent naissance.
(*S.*, VI, 122)

The poet of *Les Daimons* in 1555 had not forgotten the extraordinary Pindaric vision, derived ultimately from Hesiod,[95] of the identical origin of the gods and men: «One is the race of men, one is the race of gods, and from one mother [*Earth*] do we derive our breath; yet a power that is wholly sundered parteth us, in that the one is naught, while for the other the brazen heaven endureth as an abode unshaken for evermore. Albeit, we mortals have some likeness, either in might of mind or at least in our nature, to the immortals...» (Nem., VI, 1-5). Ronsard had acquainted the thought of France in 1546, possibly for the first time in its intellectual and religious history, with this profound vision in his ode *Au reverendissime Cardinal du Bellai*:

Dedans ce grand monde où nous sommes
Enclos generallement,
Il n'i a tant seulement
Qu'un genre des dieus, & des hommes.

Eus, & nous n'avons mere qu'une,
Tous par elle nous vivons,
Et pour heritage avons
Cette grand' lumiere commune.

L'esprit de nous qui tout avise,
Des Dieus compaignons nous rend.
Sans plus un seul different
Nostre genre & le leur divise.

La vie aus dieus n'est consumée,
Immortel est leur sejour,
Et l'homme ne vit qu'un jour
Fuiant comme un songe ou fumée.
(II, 120-121)

The poet of 1585, in the corresponding verse 164 of *Les Daimons*, seems also to have remembered, perhaps even better than the younger Ronsard, the Pindaric studies of his earliest years, for in the words «meslange agencé»[96] he appears to reject the notion that man is solely of the earth, earthy, and to reaffirm his continuing belief in an affinity between terrestrial man and the celestial gods.

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[95] *Theogony*, 44-45; cf. *Homeric Hymns*, XXX, 17.

[96] Huguet, s.v. *agencer*: «Parer, orner... mettre en ordre, disposer de la manière qui convient.»

Although in moments of discouragement he sometimes expressed doubt as to the reality of any communion between heaven and mankind,[97] those moments were relatively rare and transient.[98] Far more indicative of his stable attitude is this passage from the 1560 *Elegie au Seigneur l'Huillier*:

> Bien que le Philosophe ayt la teste chenue,
> Son esprit toutesfois se pousse outre la nue,
> Et tant plus sa prison est caducque, & tant mieux
> Soymesme se desrobe, & vole dans les cieux.
> (X, 292)

Several verses of the *Hymne de l'Esté* (1563) are almost as strongly reminiscent of the sixth Nemean as the ode to Cardinal du Bellay in 1546:

> «Les dieux tout en un coup à leur age parviennent,
> «Les hommes avec l'age en accroissance viennent:
> «Car ils sont immortels,[99] les hommes d'icy bas
> «Apres mille travaux sont subjects au trespas.
> (XII, 43)

Eventually Ronsard found these verses inadequate — they failed to express his understanding, inspired by Pindar, of a consanguinity between the gods and men. In the definitive edition of 1587 the fourth verse was transformed in one of Ronsard's most meaningful utterances to establish that consanguinity:

> «... les hommes d'ici bas,
> «Des dieux enfans bastards croissent pour le trespas.
> (*S.*, VI, 167)

The crossbred children of the gods are a mingling, a «meslange agencé», of earth and spirit, of mortality and divinity, in a life that grows toward death.[100]

If this is true of mankind in general, it is especially true of those who have given their lives to poetry. «Poetry, in Ronsard's view, reaches up into the highest realms of man's intellectual and spiritual endeavour. It is the vehicle of all man's noblest aspirations, and to become a poet is to commit one's whole being to a most sacred purpose... The poet is a being 'soustenu et poussé du Dieu',[101] he is a vessel which by reason of its purity is worthy to

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[97] See, for example, the elegy to Robert de la Haye, X, 318, vv. 77-78.

[98] Cf. vv. 135-136 in the same elegy to R. de la Haye.

[99] «Le mot *ils* se rapporte aux dieux...» Note by Laumonier.

[100] Cf. XIII, 113, the first six variant verses of 1584-1587 following v. 736; XV, 39, vv. 1-18; 101, vv. 433-442; 110, vv. 1-16. — Two sonnets for Hélène: *Bien que l'esprit humain...* and *En choisissant l'esprit...* XVII, pp. 229-230), express a strongly contrary attitude.

[101] «P. de Tyard, *op. cit.*, [*Solitaire premier*, ed. S.F. Baridon], p. 73.» Note by G. Castor. — In the same edition of *Sol. prem.* see p. 10, lines 185-188, p. 16, lines 136-140, and pp. 21-22.

receive emanations from the divinity and to give them forth again to the ordinary run of men in the supremely harmonious form of poetry.»[102] For Ronsard, as for Du Bellay, Pontus de Tyard, and Jacques Peletier, no limitation could be placed on the ideal substance of poetry. Its dimensions were those of the universe itself, for the votaries of the Muses had been admitted to the confidence of the gods: «Car eux ravis, et abstraicts des pensements terrestres, conçoivent les secrets celestes, divins, naturels et mondains: pour les manifester aux hommes.»[103]

Ronsard's sense of this affinity with a divine order is evident from his first poem, *A son Luc*, almost a decade before the publication of his odes:

> Dieus! de quel oblation
> Aquiter vers vous me puis-je,
> Pour remuneration
> Du bien receu qui m'oblige?
> Certes je suis glorieus
> D'estre ainsi ami des Dieus,
> Lesquels m'ont fait recevoir
> Le meilleur de leur sçavoir
> Pour me paistre, & m'en nourrir...
> (II, 161-162)

In a Pindaric ode to his colleague Baïf he employs an image in which the poet's pen — a feather, a quill, a wing, a bird in heavenward flight — symbolizes this commitment to a life of transcendent aspiration:

> O BAÏF, la plume pronte
> Vouloir monter jusqu'aus dieus,
> D'un vol qui le ciel surmonte
> Trompe l'enfer odieus.
> (I, 131; cf. I, 135, vv. 69-70)

That aspiration dictates some of the noblest verses of the *Hymne du Ciel* dedicated to Jean de Morel, in which the intellectual and spiritual consubstantiality of man and heaven is twice reaffirmed, at the beginning:

> O CIEL net, pur, & beau, haute maison de DIEU,
> Qui prestes en ton sein à toutes choses lieu,
> Et qui roules si tost ta grand' boule esbranlée
> Sur deux essieux fichez, que la vistesse aislée
> Des Aigles, ny des ventz par l'air, ne sçauroient pas
> En volant egaller le moindre de tes pas.
> Seulement le penser de l'humaine sagesse,
> Comme venant de toy egalle ta vitesse.[104]
> (VIII, 141-142)

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[102] Graham Castor, *Pléiade Poetics*, pp. 35-36.

[103] André Boulanger, ed., *L'Art poëtique de Jacques Peletier du Mans (1555)*, p. 79.

[104] «Seule la pensée humaine, d'origine céleste, égale ta vitesse.» Note by Laumonier.

and at the end:

> CIEL, grand Palais de DIEU, exauce ma priere:
> Quant la Mort delîra mon ame prisonniere,
> Et celle de MOREL, hors de ce corps humain,
> Daigne les reçevoir, bening, dedans ton sein
> Apres mille travaux, & vueille de ta grace
> Chez toy les reloger en leur premiere place.
> (VIII, 149)

Years after he had written these and many other similar passages the poet hoped that a disciple for whom he had composed his *Art poëtique* would understand the otherworldly nature of great poetry, and that his thought would of itself rise to «a 'higher' realm of being differing in its essential nature... from the lower»: «... animé d'un gentil esprit, ne laisseras rien entrer en ton entendement qui ne soit sur-humain & divin. Tu auras en premier lieu les conceptions hautes, grandes, belles, & non trainantes à terre» (XIV, p. 5; cf. XVIII, 91, vv. 67-74).

These great correlative polar themes in which the thoughts and labors of his life were framed[105] attended Ronsard to the end. On the day before his death he composed a sonnet, the final one of the *Derniers vers*, in which the permanent conflict between worldly attractions, «trainantes à terre», and an «entendement sur-humain & divin», was at last resolved. Like the aging Pindar of the final verses of the eighth Pythian, for whom a gleam of sunshine from heaven might bring a radiant light and a gentle life, Ronsard had found «the sole region in which either the intellect or the heart of man, ceasing, even in this present life, to pursue shadows, can find rest»:

> Il faut laisser maisons & vergers & Jardins,
> Vaisselles & vaisseaux que l'artisan burine,
> Et chanter son obseque en la façon du Cygne,
> Qui chante son trespas sur les bors Mæandrins.
>
> C'est fait j'ay devidé le cours de mes destins,
> J'ay vescu j'ay rendu mon nom assez insigne,
> Ma plume vole au ciel pour estre quelque signe
> Loin des appas mondains qui trompent les plus fins.
> (XVIII, 180)

[105] Cf. VIII, 177, vv. 287-299; 178, vv. 333-336; X, 69, vv. 9-14, esp. the beautiful eleventh verse: «Tout le soing terrien vous chassent hors des yeux»; XII, 46, vv. 1-16; XIII, 137, vv. 123-130; 163, vv. 65-74.

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